

BANDWAGON

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2002



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THE FRONT COVER

The two largest circuses in America combined for a New York engagement at Madison Square Garden. The P. T. Barnum Greatest Show on Earth and the Great London Circus joined with the Adam Forepaugh' Circus, Menagerie and Hippodrome to open March 14, 1887.

The Courier Company produced a beautiful courier booklet for the grand combination. The back cover of the courier is on the cover of this issue. It is from the Pfening Archives.

THE BACK COVER

In 1906 Martin J. Downs toured the Cole Bros. United Shows for the first time. The Erie Litho Company produced a color courier for the circus. It is from the Pfening Archives.

2002 CHS CONVENTION

The 2002 Circus Historical Society convention will be held in Toronto, Ontario, Canada August 22-25.

The first new edition in three years of Cirque du Soleil will be the featured circus. The Canadian National Exposition, Ontario Place concerts and the summer circus school at Harbor Front will all be going as well. The hotel and registration information will appear in the

March-April Bandwagon.

A selected hotel will be within walking distance of Cirque du Soleil and the Canadian National Exposition.

Currently one United States dollar buys one dollar and fifty-nine cents Canadian.

Toronto, "The World Within a City," is the largest theater town outside of New York City. The city has North America's finest and safest public transit system, with downtown served by buses, subway and street cars, known as "Red Rockets."

CORRECTIONS

The photo on page 34 of the Frank A. Robbins article in the November-December *Bandwagon* is the wrong John Rooney.

The reference to Winchester, Maryland in the Robbins article is also in error, it was Westminster, Maryland.

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RINGLING BROS. and BARNUM & BAILEY COACH HISTORY 1919-1946

By Robert S. MacDougall

This segment will begin with the combining of the Ringling Brothers Worlds Greatest Shows and the Barnum & Baileys Greatest Show On Earth for the season of 1919, through the Sam Gumpertz years 1932-1937, the John Ringling North years 1938-1942, the Robert Ringling years 1943-1946 with the take over by John Ringling North and James Haley.

PREFACE

A brief review of events leading to the combination is as follows: The surviving Ringling brothers operated shows separately through the 1918 season. Henry died in 1918, preceded by Al (1852-1916); Otto (1875-1911) and August (1854-1907). Otto and Al shared management responsibilities with John and Charlie. Otto managed the Barnum & Bailey show and Al and Charlie traveled with the Ringling Show while John routed both shows. His duties kept him traveling about the country extensively in his private railroad cars and made brief visits to each of the traveling shows during the season. Henry took over managing the Barnum & Bailey show after Otto's death in 1911. The death of Henry in 1918 left John and Charlie as the only surviving brothers, combining the two shows seemed inevitable. Some of the contributing factors leading to the combining of the shows are the 1916 season was not a good one for the Ringling Enterprises. The war in Europe was having its effects even though the United States had not yet gotten into the conflict. Inflation was rearing its ugly head, prices for essentials were rising, and people were saving their money for even harder times expected to come. Again 1917 was another bad circus season but for a different reason. American factories were busy turning out war supplies for England



Photo No. 1 Typical example of the Barnum & Bailey open vestibule coaches of the 1910's. Ringling Museum of the Circus.

and France and for the growing American army and navy. There was plenty of money. The shows were just opening the new season when the United States declared war on Germany.

Despite the great difficulties encountered, parades were given every day, also, during the war railroad transportation became acute and the Ringlings were beginning to wonder if the two huge circus were too much. In 1918 there was still an acute shortage of help, the Government told the surviving brothers that for 1919 they could not make but four locomotives available to them. Since both the Barnum & Bailey and Ringling shows each operated four sections, this meant that one or the other of the shows could not operate. The long postponed deci-

sion to consolidate the two shows was made.

The Ringling Bros.' World's Greatest Shows left winter quarters in Baraboo, Wisconsin in the spring of 1918, never to return. The Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show On Earth departed winter quarters in Bridgeport, Connecticut in the spring of 1918. Both shows would return to the Bridgeport site at the end of the 1918 season and continue to use Bridge-

Photo No. 2 Examples of recently acquired Wagner Palace Cars on Ringling Bros. just prior to the combine, c-1910's. Author's Collection.





No. 3 Ringling Bros. No. 3 advertising car. This car became the No. 1 Ad Car in 1919 on the Combined Shows. Circus World Museum collection.

port as the combined shows winter quarters until relocation to Florida at the end of the 1927 season.

Quarantine regulations made necessary by the epidemic of Spanish Influenza at one swoop brought the circus season of 1918 to a close in early October. The Ringling show was sent to winter quarters from Waycross, Georgia and the Barnum show from Houston, Texas. The rumor that there might be only one show belonging to the Ringlings taking to the road next year depending on wartime conditions. John and Charlie being the only surviving brothers, the burden of operating two winter quarters and two equally large circuses made the consolidation good business sense. The combining of the two monster shows would take place at Bridgeport winter quarters the winter of 1918.

The Ringlings were operating the two independent shows on a total of 172 railroad cars. The Barnum & Bailey show train consisted of 86 cars, including 3 advertising cars, 41 flat cars, 24 stock cars and 18 coach-

Photo No. 4 The Combined Shows No. 3 Ad Car, c-1922. Circus World Museum collection.



es. The Ringling show consisted of 86 cars, comprising 3 advertising cars, 40 flat cars, 24 stock cars and 19 coaches. The combined show would use a total of 95 cars, namely 3 advertising cars, 43 flat cars, 27 stock cars and 22 coaches. A variety of different style coaches were present on both shows in 1918. Cars with arched windows and full vestibules were acquired in the mid to late 1910's. Cars with open vestibules and cars



with narrow closed vestibules were present in both shows consists.

Cars purchased in the mid-1910's may have been built by companies like Wagner, Barney and Smith and Pullman. An effort to match individual cars purchased by John Ringling. The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey to existing photographs that were in the circus consists has been inconclusive in most cases. To complicate the positive identification of such cars is the lack of show documentation and records. Although many bits of information exist, the dealings of John Ringling with the Pullman Company are complicated. It is difficult to distinguish

whether John was buying cars for the circus or the railroads he owned. Existing Pullman Company records reveal that John was indeed a bargain hunter. He purchased complete cars for as little as a few hundred dollars to one or two thousand dollars, he rarely passed up a good bargain. These cars were sold by Pullman which declared the exact condition the cars were in and exactly what equipment the cars had in them. They were still very sound cars with lots of useful life left in them, but generally considered to be fixer-uppers. John had the car shops manned by skilled craftsmen as part of his railroads he owned. These shops were capable of rebuilding any type of railroad car including steam engine rebuilds. By the mid 1910's

Photo No. 5 RB & BB No. 1 Ad car. This car was originally a U. S. Government hospital train side door patient car. Converted to an ad car by The Osgood Bradley Car Company Worcester, Massachusetts. Circus World Museum collection.

John owned three or four shortline railroads.

An article appearing in the *Santa Fe Magazine* was reproduced through the courtesy of *Oklahoma Today* by Jerry Sullivan. The article gives some insight to John Ringling, the circus man and his railroads. An interesting quote from the magazine bares further study but is of enough interest to include in this article. "The Ringling Railroad carried the roustabouts, roughnecks, and tons of equipment necessary to develop a new oil field as far as the end of the tracks. There they were transferred to freight wagons. As developments were made in railway transportation, eastern lines began to abandon their wooden coaches. (This will be explained later in this article) John Ringling purchased many of these from Hartford & New Haven Railroad (SIC. New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad) and sent them



Photo No. 6 A string of RB & BB 4th section coaches, 1919. Note: Arch window, full vestibule type car, second from the end. Circus World Museum collection.

to Oklahoma. These New York Limited coaches, plush and richly upholstered, were used to transport the roustabouts and roughnecks. Quarters along the work line for section hands and commissary were out dated cars from Ringling Brothers' Circus special train equipment." "Ringling was negotiating for a town site to build around the railhead at the end of the track. In April 1914, a land purchase made from Pinkney B. Turner became the terminal point for the railroad and the new town there was named Ringling, Oklahoma." The railroad was known as the Oklahoma, New Mexico & Pacific Railroad Company, "The Ringling Line."

The 1919 Combined Shows used 22 coaches, a selection of the best cars from both shows that left 15 coaches at the Bridgeport winter quarters. The condition of the coaches varied

Photo No. 7 RB & BB coach 73, arch window, open vestibule type car 1919. Tibbals Collection.



from fair it good. Cars having open vestibules, narrow semi closed vestibules, full vestibules and steel reinforced underframes would make up the total of 22 cars selected for the 1919 season.

The Pullman Company records show that John Ringling and the Ringling Brothers had dealings with the Pullman Company starting in 1895, purchasing cars and having cars repaired by the company. The coaches were constantly being upgraded and replaced due primarily to age, heavy use, derailments and fires. A limited number of photographs from 1919-1932 survive, also a limited number of actual documents describe transactions between the Ringlings and the Pullman Company.

The Pullman Company operated the largest fleet of sleeping cars and became the largest manufacturer of passenger cars in North America. Pullman absorbed several manufacturers as well as competing firms

that provided sleeping car services to railroads. The Pullman Company purchased the Wagner Palace Car Company which provided sleeping car services located in Buffalo, New York in 1899, and also absorbed the sleeping car operations of the New York, New Haven & Hartford (NY, NH & H) railroad. This purchase came about principally because of the restriction on the use of wooden cars in the tunnels leading to Grand Central Station in New York City. These acquisitions became a source of cars for the circus from the early 1900's to the early 1920's. The former New York, New Haven & Hartford parlor cars rebuilt by Pullman in 1918 for the U. S. Government Medical Department and were referred to as "Unit Cars." The circus initially acquired some of these cars in late 1922.



Photo No. 8 RB & BB coach 74, open, narrow vestibule type car, being pushed by an elephant in Bridgeport, Connecticut winter quarters. This car was replaced in 1923 and remained as surplus. Frank Updegrove photo.

The replacement cars added to the two shows during the 1910s had steel underframes and full vestibules. Pullman records show four steel vestibule cars were purchased in March of 1914 and another six similar cars in 1916. These cars were refitted and made ready for use on both shows in the Bridgeport and Baraboo winter quarters car shops. No actual records have been discovered that disclose which cars were replaced.

Henry Ringling's death on October 11, 1918 resulted in John M. Kelley, the Ringling attorney, preparing a

document listing the circus property of the Ringling Bros. show, the Barnum & Bailey show and the defunct Forepaugh-Sells show and surplus at Bridgeport. The trains and equipment used for the 1918 is listed, as is a list of coaches not in use during the 1919 season.

The 1919 train had 3 advance cars and 92 cars back. The coaches listed by section were: 1st section had two coaches; 2nd section had one lunch car and six coaches; 3rd section had one coach; 4th section had one private car, one lunch car and sleeper, one combination storage and sleeper, one stateroom car and eight coaches.

Coaches listed on John M. Kelley's inventory list each show by their numbers as follows: Barnum & Bailey-51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58*, 59*, 60*, 61, 62*, 63*, 64*, 65, 66, 67, 68 cars not in use 6* and 50*. Ringling Brothers -75*, 76*, 77*, 78, 79, 80*, 82*, 83*, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92* and 30*. The asterisk (*) denotes wood cars not used in 1919.

The Ringling brothers purchased cars from Pullman for both the Barnum & Bailey show and the Ringling Bros. show. Many of these cars were former Wagner Palace Cars that were available through Pullman and were the full vestibule and arch window type cars. Most of the cars were ten, twelve and fourteen open section sleeping cars, which were relatively easy to convert to circus use. Photographs taken in Baraboo and Bridgeport winter quarters verify this type of car being used on both shows. This type of car was mostly on the Ringling show with a few going to the Barnum & Bailey show. There were open vestibule and narrow closed vestibule cars used in the 1919 combine.

The coach numbering in place on the Ringling show was used in 1919 and it is assumed that any Barnum & Bailey cars used were assigned Ringling sequence numbers. The 1919 coaches were numbered in the 70s, 80s and 90s. It is unknown which car numbers were used in the four sections of the train. Available photographs reveal that names were not applied on the cars, although both shows had used names on the coaches prior to the combine. The title RINGLING BROS. and BAR-



NUM & BAILEY COMBINED SHOWS was painted above the windows and the car number below the windows, near the vestibules. The coaches of the 1920's had R. B. and B. B. in the center of the car, in place of the car name. This practice was used through 1929 or 1930.

Some Private Cars

John Ringling routed both of the circuses but also had extensive business dealings in oil, ranching and railroading. He owned land in Montana and also a railroad named the White Sulphur Springs & Yellowstone Park Railroad. He used two different private cars during the 1910's named the Wisconsin which he purchased from Pullman. Pullman Journal entry N-3, p. 61 "for John Ringling, (1) private car, completion 3/16/1905, Lot #C-10. Cash Journal N-6, p. 470 "John Ringling, construction of car Wisconsin, \$11,325.23 6/3/1905 and the Sarasota is believed to have been acquired by John in November 1912 as used Wagner Palace Sleeping Car named Mariposa, it is further believed that the car was rebuilt into the private car at the car shops located on the St. Louis & Hannibal Railway, owned by John Ringling in Missouri. Surviving photographs show his private car Wisconsin in the consist of the circus train. It is doubtful that John remained on the show for extended periods of time. A book

Photo No. 9 View of open vestibule coach of the Combined Shows, taken inside Bridgeport, Connecticut winter quarters. Author's collection.

written by an African-American who served as a porter on both cars have revealed that he was present on the cars when John paid brief visits to the show. John traveled between his apartment in New York City, Chicago, White Sulphur Springs, Montana and Sarasota, Florida while routing the show throughout the country. John Ringling had the Pullman Company construct another private car. The second car would be an all steel car. It was named Jomar a combination of letters of his first name and that of his wife, Mable with 'r' for Ringling. The new private car was delivered in 1917. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ringling occupied private car #84, formerly John's private car Sarasota and was surplus in 1918 when John took delivery on his new car Jomar. A reciprocal agreement with the railroads allowed him, as a railroad owner, to move his private cars throughout the country's rail systems.

The 1919 Coaches

Photographs taken in Baraboo winter quarters of the Ringling Bros.

Photo No. 10 RB & BB arch window, full vestibule type coaches 87 and 88, c-1922. Pfening Archives



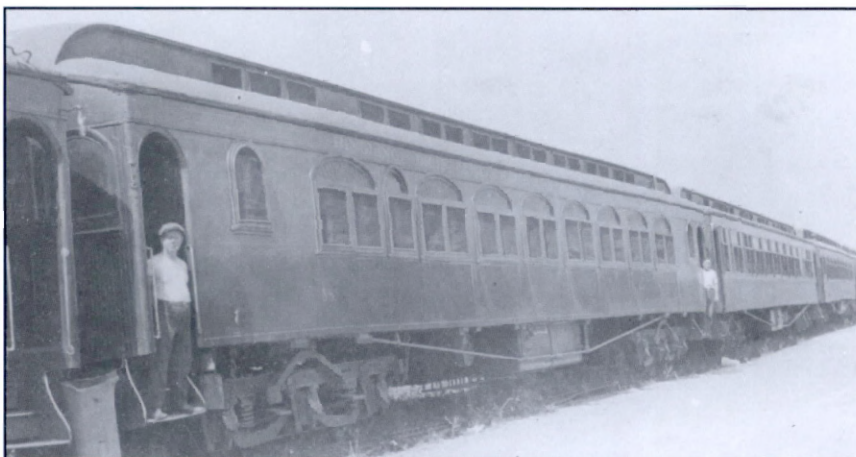


Photo No. 12 RB & BB coaches 1922. Circus World Museum collection.

train show a string of arch window, full vestibule coaches on a track next to the car shops. A team of horses and a wagon are unloading laundry from the cars. Some numbers are distinguishable as 91 and 90. Other coaches in the same photograph might be 89 and 88. These same cars appear in a 1920 photograph of the combined shows. A rare view taken inside the car shops at the Bridgeport winter quarters in 1909 shows some of the coaches and advertising cars. It is possible that one of these cars was used in the 1919 combined shows. Other photographs reveal the presence of arch window, full vestibule cars on Barnum & Bailey in the mid to late 1910's.

The limited photographs of this period verify only some of the cars that were on the 1919 show. A possible consist of the 1919 coaches is as follows: 1st section 72 and 73; 2nd section 74, 75, 76, 77, 78 lunch car

Photo No. 13 Photo taken May 28-30, 1923 Cleveland, Ohio. Coach 94, in foreground is a new rebuilt by Osgood Bradley in 1923. Author's collection.



and 79; 3rd section 80, only one coach; 4th section 81, 82, 83, 84 private car, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92. Cars identified as ex-Ringling cars from 1918 are 91, 90, 89, 88, 87 and 85 all are arch window, full vestibule cars. The new private car that Charlie started using in 1918 is also in the 1919 consist. A couple of ex-Ringling cars in the 2nd section are 78 the lunch car that was built new in 1912 for the workingmen, also the combination storage and sleeper mentioned earlier may have been car 81 presumed to have had a Delco light plant which provided electrical power for the 4th section.

The *Billboard* issue of May 10th 1919 reported a sleeping car fire. On May 5th sleeping car #90 caught fire, very early Sunday morning in the yards at Second and Henderson streets, Jersey City. The car would have undoubtedly become a total wreck but for the prompt arrival of the fire fighting apparatus. What at one time looked like a serious conflagration was averted. Fortunately every one escaped without injury. It is assumed that the car was repaired and stayed in service.

The consist of the 1920 train was taken from notes made by Issac Marcks when the show played his home town of Pittsfield, Massachusetts on July 6th 1920. He

observed that there were a total of 93 cars carried in four sections as follow: 1st section 22 cars, 16 flats, 3 stocks, 3 coaches--50 wagons including 23 cages; 2nd section 22 flat cars carrying 64 wagons, no stock cars or coaches accompanied this section; 3rd section 24 cars, 4 flats, 11 stocks, 7 coaches--9 wagons; 4th section 25 cars, 13 stocks and 12 coaches. His notes reveal to us the colors of the wagons and sleepers being red and the flats and stocks were yellow and red. He saw one of the three advance cars which was painted yellow with dark green.

The 1920 panoramic photograph taken in Cleveland, Ohio of the entire lot setup with the lake in the background. The photograph gives us a look at the assortment of coaches that are parked on the 'S' shaped track that ran through the middle of the lot. Coaches that can be identified by numbers are 92, 80, 93 and 76, cars seen are open vestibule, narrow closed vestibule and full vestibule cars. Other photos taken at an unknown location show what are believed to be the 4th section coaches, these photographs were found in the Circus World Museum photo collection in Baraboo, Wisconsin.

We are fortunate to have Issac Marcks' notes for 1921. The show arrived in Pittsfield, Massachusetts on Sunday July 3rd, the July 4th Holiday falling on a Monday. As the trains arrived from Bridgeport, Connecticut, which was played on the 2nd, the 1st section had 22 cars, 16 flats, 3 stocks, 3 coaches--51 wagons, including 24 cages, 1 auto, 1 tractor; 2nd section had 23 cars, 10 flats, 6 stocks, 7 coaches--27 wagons, 3 autos, 2 tractors; 3rd section had 23 cars, 17 flats, 5 stocks, 1 coach--51 wagons, 1 auto; 4th section had 24 cars, 12 stocks and 12 coaches. There were a total of 92 cars back and 3 advance cars. The shows' color scheme was wagons and sleepers are red with stock cars and flat cars yellow with green ends.

Several photographs taken in 1922, in the Circus World Museum and Pfening collections, provide excellent examples of arch window, full vestibule cars. Cars shown are 85 through 91, all fourth section, arch window,

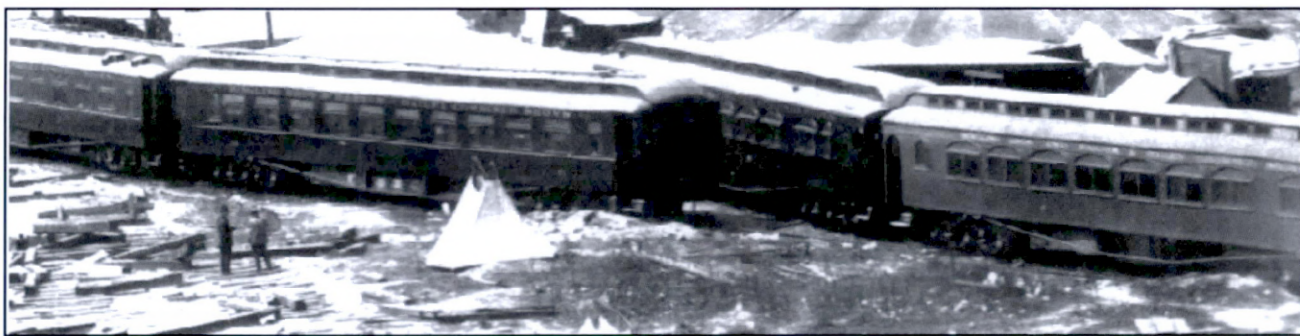


Photo No. 14 RB & BB in Cleveland 1923. Author's collection.

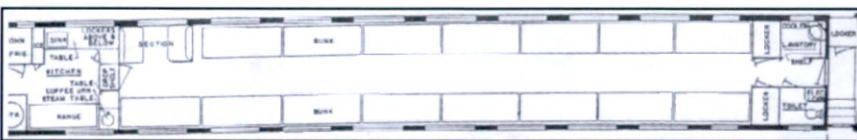
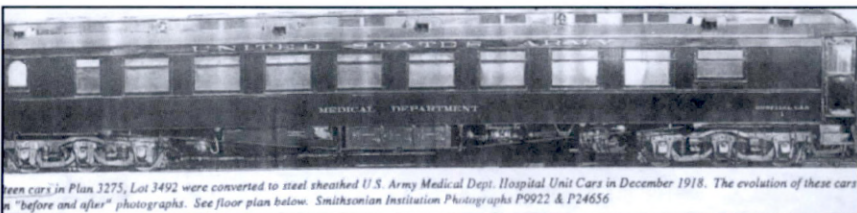
full vestibule cars. Other views show performers posing beside these cars for snap shots, some are dressed in Halloween costumes. Again Issac Marcks gives a full account of the shows' train when Pittsfield, Massachusetts was played on June 10th 1922. There were 3 coaches on the 1st section; 7 coaches on the 2nd section; 1 coach on the 3rd section and 13 coaches on the 4th section. The show had a total of 95 cars back with 3 cars in advance. The color

scheme of the show equipment and train was the same as it was the year before.

Based on extensive research of circus archives for official documents, reading of *Billboard* microfilm and studying numerous available photographs, a logical reconstruction of the coaches can be put together. The following is the author's synopsis of the combined shows coaches for the 1919-1922 period. The Barnum & Bailey coaches that were selected for use were the very best of their cars plus at least three of the Forepaugh-

Sells coaches that were transferred to the Barnum Show after Forepaugh-Sells was shelved at the end of the 1911 season. Correspondence between John and Charlie verifies this. These Barnum & Bailey cars were all open vestibules and used in the 1st and 2nd sections. Some Ringling open and narrow vestibule cars were also used. The 1st and 2nd sections carried the majority of the workingmen in the combined ten cars, one of the Ringling cars contained a lunchroom and kitchen in one end that served the workingmen in the 2nd section. The 3rd and 4th sections carried mostly performers and staff. They also carried side show performers and band plus some ushers and ticket sellers. All of the newer Ringling arch window, full vestibule cars were used in the 4th section. One of the 3rd section cars as well as a few in the 4th section were Barnum & Bailey coaches of a similar type. The very best of the remaining cars made up the balance of the 4th section.

Photo No. 15 The U. S. government hospital cars. The bottom photo shows a string of these cars. Circus World Museum collection.



The Government Hospital Cars

The entertainment industry press had a field day with the news that the Ringling show had purchased surplus cars from the U. S. Government. Speculation and rumors about the show's intentions for the cars, plus the quantity of cars purchased, was expressed in *Billboard*. Some examples of stories by the weekly publications follow. The September 16, 1922 issue of *Billboard* by "Ringling Buy Government Cars" reads in part, "during the first world war the U. S. Government had built a number of fine steel cars (thirty-six it is believed) for hospital purposes, but which, it is understood, were never used." A wire sent from the *Billboard's* office in Cincinnati,

Ohio on September 7, 1922 to Charles Ringling, care of RB & BB Shows, Fresno, California read "Understand you bought 36 Government hospital cars, if true would appreciate details by wire." It was signed A. C. Hartman, *Billboard* editor. The Ringling Bros. reply from Bakersfield, California on September 9, 1922 addressed to A. C. Hartman, editor the *Billboard*, Cincinnati, Ohio read "Your wire, seventh, we purchased from the Government the steel Pullman cars." signed Ringling Bros. It further stated, "To what use these cars will be put the Messrs (sic) Ringling failed to state." This led to further speculation about what Ringling plans to do with the cars. The October 7, 1922 issue of *Billboard* headlined by "Discarding All Wood Sleepers" read "Ringling Bros. will replace them with recently purchased Government hospital cars." Another communication read in part "A letter of inquiry was sent to Charles Ringling, who replied from Dallas, Texas under date of September 29, 1922 as follows: "Your letter of September 16th, with reference to steel frame Government cars which we purchased recently, has been received. Will say that we are discarding the all wood sleepers for sleeping cars with steel underarm, platforms, reinforcements, etc., The Government cars recently purchased meet these requirements." Thanking you for your inquiry, I am Charles Ringling.

The U. S. Government Unit Cars

A major upgrading of the combined shows coaches was started in late 1922. The Pullman Company remodeled New York, New Haven & Hartford parlor cars for the U. S. Government medical department in 1918. They became surplus Government assets in 1922. These so called 'Unit' cars played an important roll in the RB & BB coach upgrade.

The author has gained considerable knowledge about the Army Medical Department's hospital trains and cars through years of correspondence with Major General (Ret.) Hugh F. Foster, Jr. He is an expert on military medical transportation and is writing a book on



the subject. His wealth of knowledge about the Government cars has answered questions involving the cars RB & BB purchased from the Government starting in 1922. To quote one of Hugh's letters in part, "On 29 November 1918 the Pullman Company offered to sell 20 parlor cars of floor plan 3275 (36 seat cars) all 20 cars were at the Pullman shops at Buffalo, New York on 2 December 1918. A letter to Mr. Hanson (Pullman Company representative for hospital cars) from Mr. Pflager (Mechanical Superintendent of Pullman Car Lines Company) identified 20 cars as being available. A 3 December 1918 letter from Mr. Pflager to Surgeon General of the Army stated that (a.) work on ten cars was underway at the Buffalo shops. (b.) because of post-war demands for parlor cars had risen the Pullman Company desired to substitute ten parlor cars of Plan 3265 (34 seat cars). (c.) Plan 3265 cars were 18" shorter than Plan 3275 cars, but this was not significant for hospital car use. (d.) Acting for the Surgeon General, Mr. Hanson had approved the substitution, and work was underway at the Chicago shops on the substituted cars. A Medical

Photo No. 17 RB & BB train held at the Canadian border for Probation Inspection. Pfening Archives.

Department Transportation Summary dated 30 January 1919, in reference to the hospital Unit cars, states "No. 1 to No. 10 inclusive at Port of Embarkation, Newport News, Virginia. No. 11 to No. 20 inclusive at Port of Embarkation, Hoboken, New Jersey. On 30 January 1920 twenty Unit cars were located as follows: numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10 at Norfolk, Virginia; 11, 12, 14, 16, 20 at Brooklyn, New York; #6 at Chicago, Illinois; 7, 18, 19 at San Francisco, California; 13 at San Antonio, Texas; #s 15, 17 at Hoboken, New Jersey.

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows acquired 18 of the Government hospital Unit cars. It is possible the 19th and 20th

Photo No. 18 Car No. 73 R. B. & B. It was acquired in 1926 and was the first of three ex-diners that replaced older arch window cars on the first and third sections. This car became No. 70 Connecticut and was switched in 1931, it was replaced by a Unit car and numbered 73. John Cutler photo, Circus World Museum collection.





Photo No. 19 RB & BB car 83 St. Louis. This car was an Officer's stateroom car on one of the U. S. Government hospital trains. It was remodeled by Osgood Bradley in 1923. Pfening Archives

cars were acquired by the American Red Cross but no proof of this has surfaced to date. The 20 Unit cars the Government surpluses in 1922 were all built by the Pullman Company between June 1900 and August 1907. They were remodeled for the Government by Pullman in 1918. They had hardly been in service three years when they became surplus. The cars were barely twenty years old when Ringling-Barnum purchased them, quite young considering the useful life of a passenger car could reach to fifty years. The show was fortunate to acquire such good cars to upgrade their passenger car fleet.

Three additional cars, which were not Unit cars, brought the total of cars acquired from the Government to 21. To clarify these additional cars we rely on Major General Foster's correspondence, "A ten car hospital train was built in 1916 to support General Pershing and his troops as they chased Pancho Villa around Mexico. It was stationed along the border and the primary use was evacuating sick soldiers from encampments along the border to

Photo No. 20 The RB & BB hospital car 'Florence Nightingale' created by Sam Gumpertz in 1936. This car was rebuilt into a sleeper and named Sarasota. Pfening Archives.



various hospitals." In 1918, the ten cars from the 1916 train were divided between four separate trains of seven cars each, additional cars were added at this time. These four hospital trains did not include any of the Unit cars mentioned previously. Each train was made up of the following cars: Car No. 1 kitchen, dining, personal; Car No. 2 and No. 3 were two section patient cars; Car No. 4 was a sidedoor patient car; Car No. 5 was a first-aid patient car; Car No. 6 was storage/patient/office car and Car No. 7 an Officer's stateroom car. We believe that the No. 7 Officer's stateroom car, Train 3 became RB & BB's #83 stateroom car. Two of the No. 5 first-aid patient cars, one from Train 3 and the other from Train 4. Both cars were 72'-6" long and having side loading doors on both sides. These two cars became RB&BB's new advertising cars No. 1 and No. 2.

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey chose the near-by car building shops of The Osgood Bradley Car Company located in Worcester, Massachusetts, and was given the task of re-building six cars for the 1923 season. The cars were re-built using four separate shop orders as follows: CO-7240 (1) compartment car and (2) combination passenger and baggage cars; CO-7282 (1) private car No. 84-name, Caledonia; CO-7306 (1) combination passenger and baggage car as Advertising Car No. 2 and CO-7307 (1) compartment car.

Tom Parkinson and C. P. Fox's book *The Circus Moves By Rail* describes the new advertising cars as all steel cars built by Pullman. The cars were originally built by Pullman in the

early 1900's and were wooden cars, later re-buildings added the steel reinforced undergear. The cars then had steel siding that looked like wood siding applied. The same book refers to the private car #84 for Charles Ringling named Caledonia, stated to be 85' long was rebuilt from one of the Unit cars and was 71'-6" long. The work on these cars was performed by the Osgood Bradley Car Company Worcester, Massachusetts in 1923.

The six cars that were rebuilt by Osgood Bradley for Ringling-Barnum were the new private car Caledonia #84 for Charles Ringling; the two new advertising cars No. 1 and No. 2; #81 a combination car, as a sleeper and generator car; #83 a stateroom car modified from the Officer's car out of hospital Train 3 and #94 rebuilt into a sleeper for side show personnel.

The January 20, 1923 issue of *Billboard* carried a story of Ringling-Barnum's Bridgeport winter quarters activity that stated in part, "The job of converting twenty-six steel Pullman cars into sleepers suitable for circus purposes is in itself no small task. Even though it is without doubt the largest undertaking ever given the mechanical department of the circus, it is apparently being accomplished without great effort. Without seeing one of these cars undergoing this construction it is difficult to realize the amount of work required to make it a comfortable and sanitary home for the inhabitants of this great circus city during it's traveling season. Nearly fifty mechanics, exclusive of painters and electricians, are in the car shops. When completed these cars will surpass anything ever used for circus equipment by their sturdy construction, dignified appearance and home-like comforts." The previous *Billboard*, dated January 13, 1923, had a RB & BB sale advertisement that

read, "We have for sale a number of circus sleepers just out of service in good condition. Cars may be seen at our Bridgeport, Connecticut winter quarters, and prices furnished on applica-

tion, RB & BB, Bridgeport, Connecticut." No doubt the Bridgeport winter quarters was a very busy place with the arrival of some of the Government Unit cars in late 1922 and continuing into the months preceding the beginning of the 1923 season. It required nearly five months to accomplish this work before the first under canvas date took place.

A Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows, Inc. official depreciation schedule for railroad equipment, dated March 31, 1942 listed 18 steel Pullmans acquired in 1922 at \$120,471.80. This is further proof that 18 Unit cars were bought from the U. S. Government. Two letters from the Sverre O. Braathen collection at Illinois State University reveal actual transactions between John Ringling and the Government. A letter to John Ringling dated November 6th, 1922 says in part, "Your attention to the provisions of the sale of hospital cars No. 6 and No. 7 located respectively at Fort Sheridan, Illinois and Bunnell, Colorado, which were awarded to you on sealed bid sale of September 30th, 1922, which provided that the equipment was to be moved within thirty days after date of award. Please give the matter your immediate attention and forward certified check for \$3,528.00 balance due on these two cars and shipping instructions, so that the cars may be moved from their present locations. These cars were awarded to you under the date of October 3rd, but to date nothing has been received from you as to the disposition you wish made to them. for the Chief of Engineers, very truly yours, C. E. Perry, Major, Corps of Engineers, Chief Supply Section." The letterhead is that of the War Department, Office of the Chief of Engineers, Washington. A second letter from Major C. E. Perry dated November 9th, 1922 to RB & BB Bridgeport, Connecticut. Attention Mr. John Ringling reads in part "Receipt acknowledged of your letter of November 22nd, 1922 enclosing check in the amount of \$3,528.00 being balance due on hospital cars No. 6 and No. 7, located at Fort



Photo No. 21 Jomar private car used by John Ringling North and Henry Ringling North in 1946. Steve Flint photo.

Sheridan and Bunnell, we have instructed the Commanding Officers at both of these points that these cars are subject to the order of Mr. George E. Meigan, 221 Institute Place, Chicago, Illinois." It was signed by the same Major C. E. Perry of the first letter. Whether these two Government cars were the last or the first of the 18 cars acquired is unknown. No other documents have been found. It would have taken considerable time for these cars to get to the Bridgeport winter quarters. First priority would have been given to completing the Unit cars that were added to the fourth section and making them ready for the New York City train leaving Bridgeport March 22nd 1923. The balance of the Unit cars would have to be ready for the first under canvas stand at Washington, D. C., May 1st and 2nd 1923.

The 1923 Coaches

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's purchase of the U. S. Government Unit cars brought an opportunity to greatly upgrade its passenger fleet. The new Unit cars replaced all of the older cars having open vestibules and narrow closed vestibules. The best of the arch window, full vestibule cars were moved from the 4th section to the 1st and 3rd sections. All of the coaches in the 1923 consist had full vestibules. Photographs taken by Frank Updegrave and Bob Good as well as the Cleveland, Ohio lake front panorama photograph all verify these car movements. All of the cars in the 2nd section were replaced by

Unit cars. All of the cars in the 4th section were replaced by new cars, except one arch window, full vestibule car remained. There were changes to the car numbers. 1st section cars were 70-72; 2nd section cars were 73-79; 3rd section cars were 94-96; 4th section cars were 81-91. There were 16 new Unit cars in service. A total of 24 coaches were in the 1923 train. The Jomar was not on the show full time, this accounts for some railroad contracts showing a difference in the number of coaches being 24 or 25, also effecting the total number of cars.

There is an interesting story to be told about two similar photographs showing the famous gorilla John Daniels II looking out the window of one of the circus coaches. The significance of these photographs is that they establish two important facts in this chronological coach history. John Daniels II was the 1924 feature in the menagerie, except he did not travel in a cage wagon. Reference is made in a book, *The Circus Menagerie* by Edwin P. Norwood that the gorilla traveled in the 4th section and shared a stateroom with his attendant Mrs. Cunningham. It has been said that the gorilla and Mrs. Cunningham moved between the coaches and the lot by taxi. John Daniels II was exhibited in a special display in the menagerie. These photographs also establish that there was an arch window car on the 4th section in 1924.

The number of coaches in each section changed from one season to another and possibly from one town to another. Railroad conditions dictated by grades to travel over mountains, varied the locomotive power needed to move the circus trains. Some movements required the cars



Photo No. 22 Cheyenne No.93 car. Note: generator muffler mounted on roof and louver vent in window. Gene Baxter photo.

in the circus train to be put into different consists. The Marcks notes on RB & BB train consists from 1919 to 1929 may account for some of these changes, he notes two different seasons that there were only flat cars in the second section, yet the total number of cars in each section remained balanced with 22 to 25 cars per section.

The 1925 train consists were noted by Marcks when the show passed through Pittsfield, Massachusetts June 7th. The show was traveling from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania to a six day stand in Boston, Massachusetts. 1st section 23 cars, 15 flats, 4 stocks, 4 coaches--51 wagons; 2nd section 26 cars, all flat cars--72 wagons; 3rd section 22 cars, 3 flats, 10 stocks, 9 coaches--12 wagons; 4th section 26 cars, 3 flats, 11 stocks, 12 coaches, 97 cars with 3 advance cars totaling a 100 car show. There were 25 coaches which indicates the Jomar was on the show. The arch window car in the 4th section was replaced with a Unit car, this being the 17th Unit car to be put into service. Unit car #73 was moved to the 1st section. In 1926 a car acquired from the Bureau of Mines replaced #71, an arch window car in the 1st section. An arch window car #95 was replaced by a rebuilt ex-diner, acquired from the Boston & Albany, in the 3rd section. In October near the end of the season, the sad news of Charles Ringling's death was announced.

Notes from the George Smith papers in the Pfening collection give the train consists for 1927 and 1928. Charles Ringling's private car

remained and John Ringling's private car Jomar was added to the 1927 train. Two ex-Boston & Albany Railroad diners were acquired and rebuilt into sleepers, one replaced another arch window car in the 1st section, with the second diner replacing #96 also an arch window car in the 3rd section. Some of these arch window cars were still very solid cars. They were used in winter quarters, with their trucks removed, set on timber blocking and setup to be used as storage cars.

The 1928 train lists from the Smith papers show Charles Ringling's private car missing from the train. The 18th Unit car was added to the 1929 consist in the 4th section, it was an all stateroom car and was numbered 84. Charles Ringling's private car, also numbered 84 remained in winter quarters 1929 through 1931.

Train Consists Of The 1930's

At the end of the 1930 season, Unit car number 87 was moved to the 1st section and numbered 73. The ex-diner that had been 73 car was moved to the opposite end of the 1st section coaches and renumbered 70. The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows moved their winter quarters to Florida in 1927. The show's baggage horses were sent to Peru, Indiana where the American Circus Corporation winter quarters were located. For the winter of 1930-1931 the baggage stock was transported to Peru in eleven stock cars and one workingmen's coach to carry the hostlers and grooms. The Ringling-Barnum cars received maintenance work and painting while laying over at the North Peru car shops. The return trip made prior to the opening of the tent season in early spring. During February and

early March the show was getting ready for the annual trip to New York City. The trains traveled in two sections, including the No. 1 advertising car. The first section would be made up of 18 flats, 4 coaches and the advertising car. The second section would have 10 stock cars and 12 coaches. The Jomar would not make the trip to New York City. Later, just prior to the opening

stand under canvas, the Sarasota train would leave winter quarters. The consist was made up of 22 flats, 2 storage cars and 7 coaches, the Peru train would bring 11 stock cars and 1 coach. We assume that the Jomar went out with the canvas train even though John Ringling was not taking an active role in operating the show. The complete 1931 train was made up of 40 flat cars, 23 stock cars and 25 coaches, 88 cars back and two in advance, totaling a 90 car show.

It is believed that the color of the coaches changed in 1923. The coaches had been painted red dating back to the separate shows of the 1910's. The new color scheme for the coaches was Pullman green, gold lettering, black running gear and white lead applied to the roofs. This color scheme was used for the balance of the 1920's and most of the 1930's. It is the opinion of the author that the color scheme was changed to Pullman green in 1923 because of the Unit cars coming from military service would have had a similar greenish color. The major upgrading of the coaches at this time may have influenced a color change. John Ringling North changed the color scheme to silver in 1940.

Few changes took place over the years, with personnel changing slightly from season to season and some new acts arriving and old acts leaving. The general layout of the coaches remained quite stable. The space allotted to workingmen remained the same, with the same bosses and a nucleus of workingmen returning season after season. The coaches in the first and second sections were all workingmen, bosses and a few staff people. A few workingmen traveled aboard 81 car on the

fourth section and performers lived in staterooms in some cars and in open section cars having uppers and lowers with curtains hung for privacy. The berths were setup for two people but only one person occupied a lot of the berths. There were cars for single men, married couples, ladies only, bandsmen and clowns. Only performers and management occupied staterooms. One or more of the Ringlings traveled in private cars. The third section carried mostly performers from the side show as well as the side show band and act personnel, a few workingmen, ushers, ticket and program sellers.

The Sparks Circus owned and operated by the Ringling's was taken off the road, retiring that famous old circus title the "Sparks Circus." The Sparks advertising car was rebuilt into a sleeper and was added to the 1932 train in the 3rd section as car number 97 and named Pittsburgh.

Frank Updegrove worked in the baggage stock department of RB & BB in 1932 and made a very complete list of the 1932 train. His was the first to list the coaches with their names and numbers. George Smith's lists only refereed to numbers as there had not been any names used on the coaches since the combining of the two shows. Updegrove's list has been enhanced with the addition of the type of car. 1st section 70 Connecticut, ex-diner, workingmen; 71 Indiana, ex-Bureau of Mines, workingmen; 72 Minnesota, Unit car, workingmen; 73 Michigan, Unit car, workingmen. 2nd section 74 Illinois, Unit car, workingmen; 75 Florida, Unit car, workingmen; 76 Wisconsin, Unit car, workingmen; 77 Nebraska, Unit car, workingmen; 78 Maryland, Unit car, workingmen; 79 Alabama, light plants, Unit car, workingmen. 3rd section 94 Atlanta, ex-diner, workingmen and ushers; 95 New Orleans, ex-diner, side show and ushers; 96 Portland, nine-window car, side show car; 97 Pittsburgh, ex-Sparks ad car, ushers and front door. 4th section 81



Photo No. 23. Private car DeeDee used by Sam Gumpertz 1933-1937. Pfening Archives.

lants, Louisville, light Unit car, workingmen; 82 Des Moines, Unit car, performers; 83 St. Louis, ex-officers car, performers staterooms; 84 Cleveland, Unit car, performers staterooms; 85 New York, Unit car, performers staterooms; 86 Worcester, Unit car, performers staterooms; 88 Los Angeles, Unit car, performers staterooms; 89 Seattle, Unit car, performers open sections; 90 Washington, Unit car, performers open sections; 91 San Antonio, Unit car, single performers, open sections. Jomar private car.

The Gumpertz Years 1933-1937

John Ringling was sidelined by ill health and serious financial problems. The Ringling board of directors met in November of 1932. The meetings results was John Ringling stepping down and Sam Gumpertz taking over as president and general manager of the Ringling-Barnum circus.

The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Combined Shows that Sam Gumpertz took over was a show that John Ringling had put together,

Photo No. 20. Inside the Florence Nightengale hospital car in 1937. Author's collection.



Gumpertz only made minor modifications. The fiftieth anniversary of the Ringling brothers establishing their show in 1884 was celebrated.

The train would be the same size it was in 1932 except that the Jomar private car would be replaced by a different private car. The car that Gumpertz re-named DeeDee is believed to have been transferred from Peru, Indiana where it had been used on the Sells-Floto Circus as a private car for Tom Mix during the early 1930's.

The baggage horses, hostlers and grooms would be sent to Peru winter quarters for the winter of 1933-1934 as had been the practice since the winter quarters were acquired with the purchase of the American Circus Corporation in 1929.

Gumpertz announced that Robert Ringling, son of Charles and Edith Ringling, would travel with the show in 1934 and do public relations. Edith Ringling was a Ringling vice president and served on the board of directors. The stateroom car #84 Cleveland would be replaced by private car #84 Evanston and occupied by Edith Ringling and her son Robert.

In the spring of 1934 the trains traveled to New York City for the Madison Square Garden engagement. The canvas train would leave Sarasota just prior to the end of the Boston Garden date. The baggage stock train would join the Sarasota train at Brooklyn, New York for the first stand under canvas.

Col. Tim McCoy, star of western films joined the show to headline the wild west concert after show. A private car named Cheyenne by McCoy was added to the 3rd section becoming the fifth car in that section. It was numbered 93 and would increase the total number



Photo No. 24 Charles Ringling's private car 84 Caledonia passing in front of Mt. Shasta, Oregon c-1923. This car was converted into a private car from a U. S. Government Unit car by Osgood Bradley in 1923. Circus World Museum collection.

of coaches to 26. Gordon Potter, noted historian made a list in 1935 giving the names and numbers of the coaches on the four sections. There were four coaches in the 1st section; six coaches in the 2nd section; five coaches in the 3rd section and eleven coaches in the 4th section. There were two advertising cars ahead of the show.

Gumpertz replaced one of the coaches with a hospital car in the 1936 train. The advertising car used by the Hagenbeck-Wallace and Forepaugh-Sells Combined Shows in 1935 was rebuilt into the hospital car and named the Florence Nightingale and numbered 99, fitted with an electrical plant and heating facilities, it contained three separate wards and an operating room. The car was painted in the same color scheme as the other coaches. Doctor Joseph H. Bergin and nurses staffed the car. Though unique and receiving its share of publicity during the season, it was not successful idea. The Florence Nightingale survived only the 1936 season. The coach it replaced was put back on the train in 1937. The total number of coaches remained at 26.

John Ringling died on November 2nd 1936. John Ringling North, as executor of John Ringling's estate, gave him a foothold to gain power towards the end of 1937. Gumpertz submitted his resignation on

November 20th. North was back in control of the show. Johnny North launched a modernization and streamlining of the circus for 1938. He acquired Gargantua The Great, giant gorilla, as well as engaging new production people to glamorize the performance. North and his brother Henry took over the Gumpertz private car and changed the name of the car to J. R., 100

Wild animal collector, Frank Buck was hired to appear in spec and to lecture about Gargantua The Great. The private car Cheyenne used by Col. Tim McCoy in 1937 became the private car for Frank Buck. The name of the car is uncertain, some lists call it Sumatra while others called it Malaya or Malaysia. No photographs have been found to date proving or disproving one or the other.

The ex-Florence Nightingale was rebuilt into a sleeper and given the name Sarasota. It brought the total of coaches to 27 at the start of the 1938 season. Serious labor problems plagued the show, causing it to close in Scranton, Pennsylvania on June 22nd. North then placed Ringling-Barnum features with the Al G. Barnes Sells-Floto Combined Circus and reopened in Redfield, South Dakota. It traveled on fifty cars. The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey show train was taken to Sarasota winter quarters from Scranton. The condensed train of 16 flats, 1 baggage stock car and 8 coaches left Sarasota to join the Barnes show in Redfield, South Dakota. When combined there would be 3 Barnes elephant cars, 4 Barnes baggage stock cars, 9 Barnes flat cars and 7 Barnes coaches. The surplus equipment from the Barnes

show was sent to Peru winter quarters. One Ringling-Barnum ad car joined the Barnes ad car to finish the season. The 8 RB & BB coaches that joined the Barnes show were 70 Connecticut, 76 Wisconsin, 78 Maryland, 85 New York, 89 Seattle, 93 Sumatra, 99 Sarasota and private car J. R., 100. The Barnes coaches did not have names but were numbered 40, 41, 42 and 43 workingmen's coaches and 44, 45, and 46 performers coaches. The Barnes coaches were painted red and the stock cars and flat cars were orange. The Ringling-Barnum stocks and flats were silver and the coaches remained Pullman green. A large number of the baggage horses were replaced with Caterpillar tractors and the large fleet of Mack trucks.

North launched a modernized streamlined show on the road for 1939. There were five less coaches due to efficiency and streamlining the operations, also the replacement of the horses, hostlers and grooms and the tents it required it house them. Cars taken off were 75 Florida, workingmen and 97 Pittsburgh from the 3rd section. After the Chicago, Illinois date three additional coaches were removed, they were 84 Evanston, 93 Sumatra and 88 Los Angeles. The performers car 86 Worcester had a name change to Boston. The total number of coaches at the beginning of the season was 27 and 22 at the end of the season. There was only one advertising car, which was the ex-Barnes-Floto car.

For the season of 1940 the second ad car was put back on the advance. The ad cars would have a new paint scheme applied of red and silver with silver lettering. The coaches would receive a new paint scheme of bright silver with silver lettering on a red letterboard. It was said that John Ringling North witnessed the Silver Meteor passenger train pass by him at a railroad crossing which influenced him to change the color scheme of the coaches to all silver. John Ringling North had the Pullman Company remodeled, air-conditioned and modernized the Jomar. The interior received an art-deco style design throughout and painted bright silver outside. The car did not have the shows title or number on it, only the name Jomar appeared in the center

of the car just below the windows. The workingmen car 75 Florida was put back into the 2nd section consist and increased the number of coaches to 24. The Boston car #86 had its name restored to Worcester after only two seasons as Boston.

Many people agreed that John Ringling North's 1941 show was at its high point both in performance and production numbers. Johnny made arrangements with designer Norman Bel Geddes to modernize the midway and menagerie and Miles White to do the costume designs. Lloyd Morgan told the author that the 1941 show was the heaviest show he had ever seen, Morgan came on the show in 1930. Some of the extra equipment had to be transported by semi-trailers that went overland. The same equipment was carried in 1942 but was greatly modified. The entire midway was decked out in patriotic red, white and blue. The number of coaches remained at 23. The advertising car received a red, white and blue paint scheme with gold lettering. There was only one advertising car used in 1941 and 1942, it was the ex-Barnes-Floto car. The advertising cars for 1940 are confusing because only one car was used in 1939, however it was lettered the No. 3 ad car. A second ad car was added in 1940 which we believe was the No. 2 car, at some point during the season the No. 3 car was changed to the No. 1 car being the Barnes-Floto car. Photographs verify this fact. The 1941 car was red with a wide silver strip running through the window area.

The Ringling family battles resurfaced in the courts and the board of directors voted Johnny North out by the end of 1942. Robert Ringling was voted in as president and assumed control of the show in 1943. The supply of materials was affected and transportation was restricted. The private car Evanston replaced the Jomar. It is believed that the car received some modifications, at this time, gaining two gothic windows in the center of the car on one side. The 1943 edition eliminated the large menagerie and the overall size of the show was reduced, traveling on only 75 cars in two sections. Car 75 Florida seemed to be a car that was

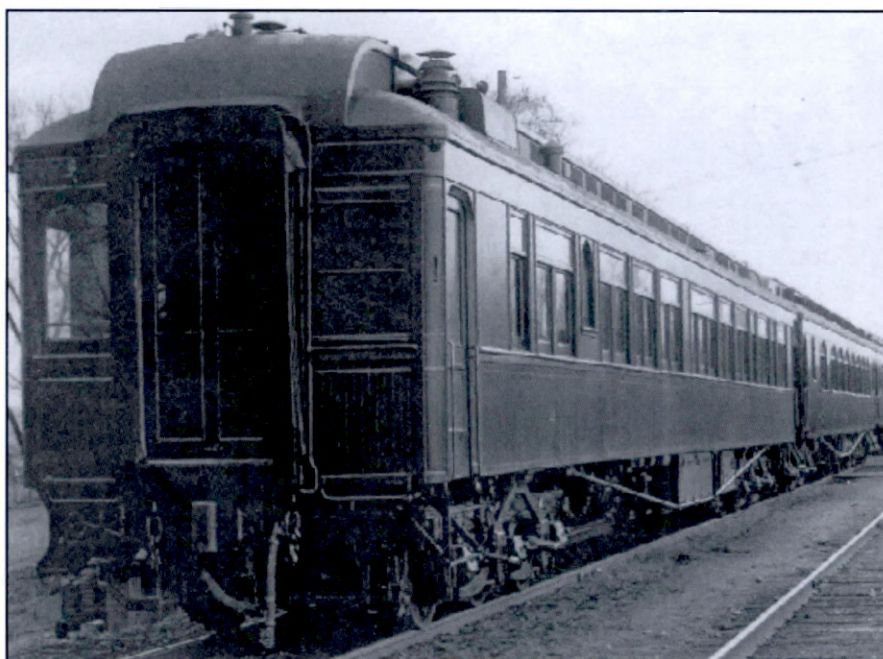


Photo No. 25 Private car Sarasota arriving Baraboo, Wisconsin on the end of the circus train c-1910's. John Ringling used this private car prior to placing the order with Pullman in 1917 for his new private car Jomar. Circus World Museum collection.

on and off the show every other year, was removed again. The Sarasota car's number was changed from 99 to 87, there had not been an 87 car in the consists since 1931. The total number of coaches was 22, 11 in each section.

The Wartime Effect

The following excerpt is taken from Joseph Bradbury's series on the history of the Ringling-Barnum 1943 season. *White Tops* Nov.-Dec. 1980 issue that says in part "The fate of the 1943 season was in the hands of the Office Of Defense Transportation (ODT). The ODT decision finally came in February. It was announced that a survey had been made of the Ringling-Barnum equipment, which included 22 coaches, 52 flat cars, 70 feet long and 13 stock cars, 70 feet long. The survey noted that the sleeping cars were of wooden underframe construction not suitable for main line service of regular trains, nor adaptable for conversion. Neither the Association of American Railroads, nor the army is interested in using the cars. This in effect gave the green light to Ringling-Barnum

to plan on touring as usual. An interesting issue is raised, that when the U. S. Government Unit cars were purchased by Ringling-Barnum, the claim was made that when the Pullman Company rebuilt the cars for the Government, they had steel reinforced undergear. It is the opinion of the author that the standards used in 1918 that defined "steel reinforced undergear" did not meet the criteria of steel underframe cars in 1943 and by 1943 standards would be considered "wooden underframe construction." The facts are the Ringling-Barnum coaches had been built as wood cars between 1900 and 1907. The cars were nearing their life expectancy of 50 years.

The July 6th 1944 big top fire in Hartford, Connecticut was a national disaster, 169 people lost their lives. The show returned to Sarasota winter quarters to reorganize and played the balance of the season in outdoor venues. The color scheme of the coaches was changed to red with silver lettering. Two coaches were left in winter quarters after the fire and the show finished the season with 22 coaches. They were 75 Florida and 88 Los Angeles, there had been 24 coaches at the beginning of the season.

The war years were difficult on the physical equipment of the show, replacement was minimal because of rationing, labor was scarce and keep-

ing enough workingmen to setup, teardown and move the show became an on-going problem. The 1945 tour used the same number of coaches as was used before the fire in 1944. There is confusion whether the train traveled in three or four sections, also in question is the total number of cars carried. One account says the show moved in 3 sections, as follows: 1st section 21 cars; 2nd section 30 cars; and 3rd section 27 cars, for a total of 78 cars back and 1 ad car (79). The official route book puts the total at 80 cars. Possibly an additional car, probably a coach may have been added during the season. There is reason to believe this coach was 97 Pittsburgh, which would bring the total coaches to 25.

Another Change Of Control

The news was not heavily publicized in either the national press nor the trade publications, was the release from prison of James A. Haley Ringling-Barnum vice president on Christmas eve 1945. Haley had been convicted on involuntary manslaughter as an after math of the circus fire in Hartford, Connecticut on July 6th 1944. Haley was bitter towards Robert Ringling. Haley began working behind the scenes to remove Robert from his chief executive's seat. Allied in this effort would be John Ringling North. North would help him in removing Robert at the next board meeting set for April which resulted in Robert's removal as chief executive.

The impact this had resulted in Haley moving into a private car last used by John Ringling North and Henry Ringling North, named the J. R., 100. Haley renamed the car Birmingham and it was given the number 80. The Jomar private car was added and the ex-Cheyenne private car was added but no longer served as a private car. The state-rooms were occupied and the open area just inside the open observation platform carried Delco light plants for supplying electrical power to the coaches. 1946 photographs verify the Birmingham, Cheyenne and Jomar all present on the train. Plans were to run the circus train in four sections but the show ended up moving on three sections. There were 3 coaches in the 1st section, 9 coaches

in the 2nd section and 15 coaches in the 3rd section, totaling 27. One workingmen's car 73 Michigan was removed from the train. There was one advertising car still painted red, white and blue. The balance of the coaches were painted red with silver lettering.

The author would like to thank the following for their help in preparing this article. Fred Dahlinger Jr., the Circus World Museum archives Baraboo, Wisconsin. Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Major General (Ret.) Hugh F. Foster, Jr., Ray Buhrmaster and Howard C. Tibbals.

An After Piece

The research and preparation of this article is the culmination of over ten years work. There are a few pieces of the puzzle that remain unresolved.

A new replacement car, generally refereed to as the Bureau of Mines car, appeared on the show about the mid 1920's. It has been stated that it was from or named for the State of Montana. There are many photographs of this car taken from approximately the mid 1920's to 1947. There is no documentation of this car's acquisition has been found to date. It does not appear on the depreciation recaption of assets lists which reveal the acquisition date and source. There are no trade publication stories referring to this car. There are no clues to the specific year the car was acquired. It does not have any outstanding physical characteristics that help identify it. It does not appear in Ralph Barger's book *100 years Of Pullman Cars.*, however the book does list several Bureau of Mines cars, numerous wooden cars that were numbered #1, #2, #3 and so on. There are several steel cars identified as Bureau of Mines cars. None of these cars are identified as being related to specific States. None of the car's dispositions are circus related. The RB & BB car just is not there.

Speculation on behalf of the author goes something like this: John Ringling owned several shortline railroads starting in 1910. He owned large tracts of land in several states. He was involved in ranching and oil, he owned several oil companies that operated in different states. His first

railroad was the White Sulphur Springs & Yellowstone Park Railway in Montana. He held an interest in land operated by Smith Valley Farms of White Sulphur Springs, Montana. I think it is possible that the Bureau of Mines, State of Montana car was acquired by him through his White Sulphur Springs & Yellowstone Park Railway passing it on for use on the circus.

Missing Advertising Car Photographs

Ten years of research has not located a photograph of the No. 2 Ad Car for the 1919-1922 period. There are photographs of the No. 1 and No. 3 cars of this time period. The car manager and crew members are identified in the trade publications but never accompanied with a photograph of the crew or the car.

A fellow historian has the same predicament. He has been running an advertisement offering a cash reward to anyone having the photograph he is looking for or any information that might help find the photograph. His ad has been offered for the last fifteen years. I think that my photograph could be added to his search.

Mystery 1925 Advertising Car

A *Billboard* story in the January 31st, 1925 issue describes in great detail a new all steel advertising car being built. The story does not include a photograph. The story states that with the addition of this new car, it will give the show three all steel advertising cars.

Three advertising cars were used from 1919 to 1926 or 1927. The two new ad cars built in 1923 are well known and photographed. The No. 3 car that was present in 1919 is believed to have been used through 1926 or 1927 when the number of ad cars used was reduced from three to two.

It does not make sense for a new car to have been built in 1925 when the number of ad cars was reduced a year or two later. Photographs verify that the No. 1 and No. 2 ad cars built in 1923 were in constant service up until 1938. There are no other ad car photographs for this period. The *Billboard* story of the new car being built in 1925 remains a mystery.

Spread Sheet for RB & BB Coaches 1919 - 1929

(22) 1919	(22) 1920	(22) 1921	(23) 1922	(24) 1923
72 open vestibule ex-BB	72	72	72	70 arch, full vest. was 89 car
73 open vestibule ex-BB	73	73	73	71 arch, full vest. was 91 car
	74	74	74	72 arch, full vest. was 90 car
74 narrow vestibule	None	75	75	73 new Unit car
75 open vestibule		76	76	74 new Unit car
76 open vestibule 4 whl.		77	77	75 new Unit car
77 open vestibule		78	78	76 new Unit car
78 open vestibule ex RB		92	92	77 new Unit car
92 arch, narrow vest.		93	93	78 new Unit car
93 open vestibule		94	94	79 new Unit car
94 open vestibule				
80 arch, full vest. ex-BB	75 open v	80	80	94 new car (Osgood Bradley)
	76 open v			95 arch, full vest. was 80 car
	77 open v			96 arch, full vest. was 87 car
	78 open v			
	92 arch, n			
	93 open v			
	94 open v			
81 combination car	80 arch	81	81	81 new Unit car (Osgood Bradley)
82 arch, full vest. ex-BB	81 comb	82	82	82 arch, full vest.
83 full vestibule	82 arch	83	83	83 new car, staterooms
84 private car ex-Sarasota	83 full vestibule	84	84	84 new private car (Osgood Bradley)
85 arch, full vest, ex-RB	84 private	85	85	85 new Unit car
86 arch, full vest, ex-RB	85 arch	86	86	86 new Unit car
87 arch, full vest, ex-RB	86 arch	87	87	87 new Unit car
88 arch, full vest. ex-RB	87 arch	88	88	88 new Unit car
89 arch, full vest. ex-RB	88 arch	89	89	89 new Unit car
90 arch, full vest. ex-RB	89 arch	90	90	90 new Unit car
91 arch, full vest. ex-RB	90 arch	91	91	91 new Unit car
	91 arch			

(24) 1924	(24) 1925	(24) 1926	(24) 1927	(23) 1928	(24) 1929
70 arch	70 arch	70 arch	70 new ex-din.	70 arch 73	70 arch
71 arch	71 arch	71 new BofM	71 BofM	71 BofM	71 BofM
72 arch	72 Unit car 73	72 Unit car	72 Unit car	72 Unit car	
73 Unit car	73 arch was 72	73 arch	73 arch	73 was 70	73 ex-diner
74 Unit car	74 Unit car	74 Unit car	74 Unit car	74 Unit car	74 Unit car
75 Unit car	75 Unit car	75 Unit car	75 Unit car	75 Unit car	75 Unit car
76 Unit car	76 Unit car	76 Unit car	76 Unit car	76 Unit car	76 Unit car
77 Unit car	77 Unit car	77 Unit car	77 Unit car	77 Unit car	77 Unit car
78 Unit car	78 Unit car	78 Unit car	78 Unit car	78 Unit car	78 Unit car
79 Unit car	79 Unit car	79 Unit car	79 Unit car	79 Unit car	79 Unit car
94	94	94	94	94	94
95 arch, full vest.	95 arch	95 new ex-din.	95 ex-diner	95 ex-diner	95 ex-diner
96 arch, full vest.	96 arch	96 arch	96 new ex-din.	96 ex-diner	96 ex-diner
81 Unit Car, gen.	81 Unit car	81 Unit car	81 Unit car	81 Unit car	81 Unit car
82 arch, full vest.	82 new Unit	82 Unit car	82 Unit car	82 Unit car	82 Unit car
83 stateroom car	83 stateroom	83 stateroom	83 stateroom	83 stateroom	83 stateroom
84 private car	84 private car	84 private car	84 private car	no 84 car	84 stateroom
85 Unit car	85 Unit car	85 Unit car	85 Unit car	85 Unit car	85 Unit car
86 Unit car	86 Unit car	86 Unit car	86 Unit car	86 Unit car	86 Unit car
87 Unit car	87 Unit car	87 Unit car	87 Unit car	87 Unit car	87 Unit car
88 Unit car	88 Unit Car	88 Unit car	88 Unit car	88 Unit car	88 Unit car
89 Unit car	89 Unit car	89 Unit car	89 Unit car	89 Unit car	89 Unit car

90 Unit car	90 Unit car	90 Unit car	90 Unit car	90 Unit car	90 Unit car
91 Unit car	91 Unit car	91 Unit car	91 Unit car	91 Unit car	91 Unit car

Tabulation Sheet for Coaches.1919 - 1946

(22)	(22)	(22)	(23)	(24)	(24)	(24)	(24)	(24)	(23)	(24)	(25)	(24)
1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931
72	72	72 ov	72	70-89	70-89	70-89	70-99	70 new	70-73-90	70	70	70
73	73	73 ov	73	71-91	71-91	71-91	71 new	71 BM	71 BM	71 BM	71 BM	71
74	74 nv	74	72-90	72 arc	72 un	72 un	72 un	72 un	72 un	72 un	72	73
					73 un	73 arc	73 arc	73 arc	73-70	73	73	73
75	75 ov	75	73 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un
76	76 ov	76	74 un	75 un	75 un	75 un	75 un	75 un	75 un	75 un	75 un	75 un
77	77 ov	77	75 un	76 un	76 un	76 un	76 un	76 un	76 un	76 un	76 un	76 un
78	78 ov	78	76 un	77 un	77 un	77 un	77 un	77 un	77 un	77 un	77 un	77 un
92	92 arc	92	77 unit	78 un	78 un	78 un	78 un	78 un	78 un	78 un	78 un	78 un
93	93 ov	93	78 unit	79 un	79 un	79 un	79 un	79 un	79 un	79 un	79 un	79 un
94	94 ov	94	79 unit									
80	75	80	80	94 new	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
	76			95-80	95 arc	95	95 new	95	95	95	95	95
	77			96-87	96 arc	96	96	96 new	96	96	96	96
	78											
	92											
	93											
	94											
81	80	81	81	81 unit	81 un	81 un	81 un	81 un	81 un	81 un	81 unit	81 unit
82 ex BB	81	82	82 arc	82 arc	82 arc	82 new	82 un	82 un	82 un	82 un	82 un	82 un
83	82	83	83	83 off	83 off	83 off	83 off	83 off	83 off	83 off	83 off	83 un
84 P.C.	83	84	84	84 unit	84 un	84 un	84 un	84 un		84new	84 un	84 unit
85exRB	84	85	85	85 un	85 un	85 un	85 un	85 un	85 un	85 un	85 un	85 un
86	85	86	86	86 un	86 un	86 un	86 un	86 un	86 un	86 un	86 un	86 un
87 exRB	86	87	87 are	87 unit	87 unit	87 un	87 un	87 un	87 un	87 un	87 un	87 un
88 exRB	87	88	88 arc	88 un	88 un	88 un	88 un	88 un	88 un	88 un	88 un	88 un
89 exRB	88	89	89 arc	89 un	89 un	89 un	89 un	89 un	89 un	89 un	89 un	89 un
90 cxRB	89	90	90 rac	90 un	90 un	90 un	90 un	90 un	90 un	90 un	90 un	90 un
91 exRB	90	91	91 arc	91 un	91 un	91 un	91 un	91 un	91 un	91 un	91 un	91 un
							Jomar	Jomar	Jomar	Jomar	Jomar	Jomar

Tabulation Sheet for Coaches 1919 - 1946

(25)	(25)	(25)	(26)	(26)	(26)	(27)	(25-22*)	(23)	(23)	(23)	(24)	(24)	(25)	(27)
1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946
71 BM	71	71	71	71	71	*71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71	71
72 unit	72 unit	72 unit	72 unit	72 unit	72 unit	72 unit	72 unit	72 unit	72 unit	72 unit	72 unit	72unit	72ub	72un
73-87	73 un	73 un	73 un	73 un	73 un	73 un	73 un	73 un	73 un	73 un	73 un	73un	73un	73un
74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un	74 un
75 un	75 un	75 un	75 un	75 un	75 un	*75 un	75 un	75 un	75 un	75 un	75 un	*75 WQ	74un	74un
76 un	76 un	76 un	76 un	76 un	76 un	76 un	76 un	76 un	76 un	76 un	76 un	76 un	75un	75un
77 un	77 un	77 un	77 un	77 un	77 un	77 un	77 un	77 un	77 un	77 un	77 un	77 un	75un	75un
78 un	78 un	78 un	78 un	78 un	78 un	*78 un	78 un	78 un	78 un	78 un	78 un	78 un	77un	77un
79 un	79 un	79 un	79 un	79 un	79 un	79 un	79 un	79 un	79 un	79 un	79 un	79 un	78un	78un
			93 new	93	93	93	*94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94	94
95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95

1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946
96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	96
97	97	97	97	97	97	97	WQ	WQ	WQ	WQ	WQ	WQ	97	97
81 unt	81 unt	81 unt	81 unt	81 unt	81 unt	81 unt	81 unt	81 unt	81 unt	81 unt	81 unt	81 unt	81un	81un
82 unt	82 unt	82 unt	82 unt	82 unt	82 unt	82 unt	82 unt	82 unt	82 unt	82 unt	82 unt	82 unt	82un	82un
83 unt	83 unt	83 unt	83 unt	83 unt	83 unt	83 unt	83 unt	83 unt	83 unt	83 unt	83 unt	83 unt	93un	83un
84 unt	84 unt	84 PC	84 PC	84 PC	84 PC	94 PC	84 PC	WQ	WQ	WQ	84 PC	84 PC	84PC	84PC
85 unt	85 unt	85 unt	85 unt	85 unt	85 unt	85 unt	85 unt	85 unt	85 unt	85 unt	85 unt	85 unt	85un	85un
86 unt	86 unt	86 unt	86 unt	WQ	86 unt	86 unt	86 unt	86 unt	86 unt	86 unt	86 unt	86 unt	86un	86un
											87-99	87 WQ	87 WQ	87WQ
88 unit	88 unit	88 unit	88 unit	88 unit	88 unit	88 unit	88 unit	88 unit	88 unit	88 unit	88 unit	88un	88 unit	88un
89 unt	89 unt	89 unt	89 unt	89 unt	89 unt	*89 unt	89 unt	89 unt	89 unt	89 unt	89 unt	89 unt	89 unit	89un
90 unt	90 unt	90 unt	90 unt	90 unt	90 unt	90 unt	90 unt	90 unt	90 unt	90 unt	90 unt	90 unt	90 unit	90un
91 unt	91 unt	91 unt	91 unt	91 unt	91 unt	91 unt	91 unt	91 unt	91 unt	91 unt	91 unt	91 unt	91 unit	91un
Jomar	DeeDee	DeeDee	DeeDoe	DeeDee	DeeDee		*99 W	99 WQ	99 WQ	99 WQ				92 PC
					99 FN		100 JR	100 JR	Jomar	Jomar	Jomar			93 PC

RINGLING-BARNUM CIRCUS LETTERHEADS



THE JACKLEY DROPS

By Stuart Thayer

One of only two acrobatic circus acts to be named for an individual (the Risley act is the other) the Jackley Drops are seemingly no longer performed. And it is no wonder, given the stress on the back and shoulders that the performers of it sustained.

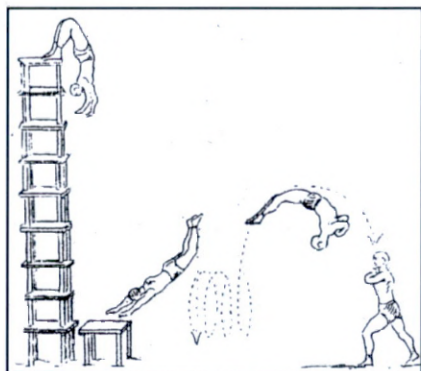


Fig 1. Drawing of the Jackley Drop. Milner Library collection.

Simply described, the act consisted of falling from a height to land on one's hands on a low platform, and doing several flip-flops, ending in a standing position. Fig. 1, from G. Strehly, *L'acrobatie et les Acrobates*, shows in diagram, the essence of the turn. Not at all complicated, it should be classed among the "daredevil" acts, such as being shot from the mouth of a hydraulic cannon. The most recent practitioner was Leon de Rousseau in 1954.

Fig. 3. Obverse and reverse of 1886 Pullman, Dingess & Co, trade Card. Circus World Museum.

It was introduced by,

and named after, an Alsatian acrobat, Nathan Jackley (Fig. 2). He was one of twenty-four children fathered with four different wives by the father of the Jackley family of acrobats. According to John Turner, as many as seventeen Jackleys performed together at one time. Born about 1850, Nathan Jackley made his ring debut at age four. He was an accomplished ring, bars, trapeze and riding performer. When he developed the Jackley Drops isn't known, but he must have originated it, since it's named for him. Strehly called him the "King of Leapers."

His first documented engagement in America was in September, 1873 at the Howard Athenaeum in Boston. In 1874 he was in Cincinnati for six weeks from August 27 to April 3. He used the

title "Jackley's Great Vienna Circus," which was set up in a tent on Emery's Lot, the block bounded by

Fourth, Fifth, Vine and Race Streets.

Fig. 2. Nathan Jackley. From Strehly, Milner Library collection.



The ads indicated that the Jackley Family would perform, though no number of persons in the group was given. Spencer Q. Stokes, his wife and four daughters, were the principal riders. Abelardo Lowanda and Us sister Clarinda did the two and four horse acts. There was a forty-piece

band.

As far as we can determine, this Cincinnati stand was the only one for the Great Vienna Circus. The next mention of the Jackleys was in November 1874, when they appeared in New York at P.T. Barnum's Hippodrome. William Slout described their participation with the Hippodrome as being the forming of human pyramids on a series of raised platforms placed about the interior. No reference was made to "Jackley Drops."

By January, 1875, the troupe was in California under the banner "Jackley's Vienna Circus combined with

NONE NAME IT BUT TO PRAISE!

PULLMAN, DINGESS & CO'S

Great London Sensation

AND

Colossal College of Trained Animals.

Everywhere admitted to be the most attractive and honorably conducted tented exhibition now before the public.

The Greatest and Grandest Combination.

LOOK! BEHOLD!

The Great Transatlantic Stars,

THE JACKLEYS

Have been engaged and now appear at every performance—NO EXHIBITION IN THE UNIVERSE CAN PRODUCE THEIR EQUALS. Mr. Nathan Jackley during the performance will turn a back somersault from a pyramid of tables 35 FEET HIGH. This is the most daring act ever attempted in this country. The Press and public are unanimous in pronouncing this daring act the greatest ever produced in this country.

Two exhibitions every show day at usual hours.

Admission 25 cents to all the Combination Shows.

THE GREAT AND ONLY

JACKLEYS.



Fig. 4. Mlle. Kabowls, as advertised in 1885 Adam Forepaugh courier. Circus World Museum collection.

Wilson's Great Circus." John Wilson was, of course, the well-known California showman, then in his sixteenth season. Here, Jackley was again advertising his somersault from a column of seven tables.

RIGHT IN LINE AND HARD TO BEAT,
FARNUM BROS.,
 DICK AND JOE
 ORIGINATORS OF THE
 GREATEST
CHAIR PYRAMID
 ACT.
 Opinion of Managers,
 Performers and Press
 all say it's the
 Greatest Thing that
 ever happened.
GUS HILL'S
 NEW YORK
 Vaudeville Stars
 FOR COMING SEASON.
 NOW THE CROWNING
 FEATURE OF
 Scribner & Smith's
 Circus.

Though Fig. 1 shows eight tables, the height of the hall may have dictated the number of tables, or the size of the furniture may have varied. The troupe members were named at this stand. They proved to be Hash, Harno, and Cassim, and they sound as if they were Arab tumblers, perhaps of Lebanese origin. We have no information as to why they were with Jackley.

Their venue was Wilson's Palace Amphitheatre in San Francisco, where they played from January 25 to April 6, 1875. The great James Robinson and his son Clarence were the headline act; Ella Zoyara, Romeo Sebastian and Nat Austin were other prominent participants. According to Don Francis, the company journeyed into the interior of California after closing in San Francisco. We have found two advertisements in Nevada, neither having Wilson's name in them but Jackley and Kingsley (Ella Zoyara) were in the title. it was like-

ly wilson's outfit. On May 6 they were in Nevada City, and on May 14, Virginia City. By October they were in the Pacific Northwest. Gordon Brown found several notices of their visit by the steamer Panama to Victoria, British Columbia, where they performed on October 2, 4 and 5. Though their presence was well-documented by the newspaper, the Colonist, none of the twenty-six performers were named, nor was Jackley in the title. On October 8, the company, Wilson's Hippodrome, appeared in Seattle. This was the last season for John Wilson as a circus owner.

Fig. 5. Advertisement in *New York Clipper* in 1893 for Farnum brothers (Dick Farnum and Joe LeFleur). Circus World Museum collection.



The Jackley troupe then returned to Europe, though Nathan occasionally spent a winter performing in the United States. As an example of this was his appearance with Pullman, Dingess & Co., a vaudeville-type show in 1885. (Fig. 3) A feature of their act in the late 1870's was to form a great human pyramid from the top of which Nathan Jackley turned a back-somersault to the ground. Nathan continued to perform with the family act until 1910. He died in London in 1923. An interesting footnote to the history of the Jackley family is that Samuel W.

Fig. 7. Photograph of Joe LeFleur in 1897 Ringling Bros. route book. Circus World Museum collection.

Gumpertz, later general manager of Ringling Brothers, Barnum & Bailey, joined the act as a nine-year old top-mounter in 1879.

An act as popular as the Jackley Drops could not go long without someone copying it. In 1885, Adam Forepaugh heavily advertised. Mile. Kabowls (Fig. 4) who performed "a death defying plunge from a 35-foot high pyramid of tables." Kabowls, said to be Russian, managed a change of costume during her fall, a sort of vertical "flying wardrobe" act. We find no more about her doing the drops after this, her first season in America, though she was listed as a trapeze performer on French's Circus in 1889.

The next practitioner of the art was George Parento, whose real name was George P. Mansfield. A native of Tidioute, Pennsylvania, and born in 1867, he was a member of the Parento troupe of acrobats, and adopted their name. Lucas Parento was the owner of the act. George and his brother, Eddie, presented a brother act in the 1880's. By at least

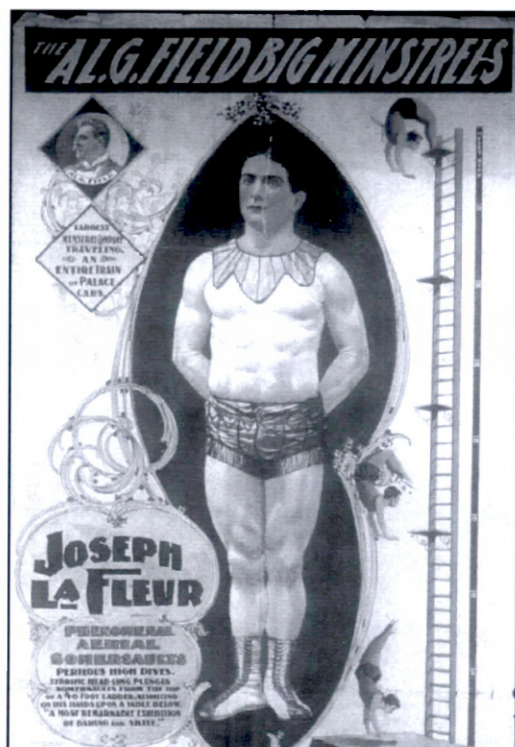


Fig. 6. Minstrel paper featuring Joe LaFleur in 1895. Milner Library, Illinois State University.

1887, George was doing the Jackley Drops. In that season, he and his brothers Eddie and William were with Menches & Barber's Big Ten Cent Circus, and later, Lemen Bros. George was with the Whitney Circus in 1889. He is mentioned in the Gollmar Bros.' program in 1900 and 1901; Kit Carson Wild West 1914; Lemen Bros., 1928. In addition to his feature act, "headlong plunges from great heights," he also did acrobatics, and performed on the trapeze. By 1932, still active, he was using an eighteen-foot ladder for the Jackley act (at age 65). He died in 1951 at age 94.

Perhaps the best-known, certainly the most heavily advertised Jackley performer was Joe LaFleur. For thirty years he did chair and table drops, which was what the Jackley Drops came to be called, at least in advertising. Both Ayres Davis and Walt Grabell, used the term "Jackley Drops" in conversations in recent years. Born in Plattsburgh, New York in 1873, LaFleur moved with his family to Providence, Rhode Island at four years of age, and made his home there the rest of his life.

In 1889 LaFleur began in vaude-

ville, and switched to circus performing the next year, appearing with Washburn & Arlington for three months. In 1891 he was with Harper Bros. (*Billboard* says Harber) from Worcester, Massachusetts, and in 1892 with Lee's Great London Shows. LaFleur formed a partnership with Dick Farnum for 1892-1893; they called themselves the Famurn Brothers, and were together until the spring of 1894 (Fig. 5). In all these affiliations, LaFleur was in vaudeville or hall shows in the winter months.

It was for the 1894 season, which he spent with Bob Hunting's Circus, that he changed from using tables to employing a thirty-foot ladder in his act. We would suggest that piling up the tables, while

good for the element of suspense, without which no circus act is truly remarkable, came to take up more time than the managers cared to allot. We say this without any proof. We have found no one using piled furniture after LaFleur switched to a ladder.

His act was so popular that he was the subject of special lithographs (Fig. 6), not only in the circus, but with hall shows as well. Beyond Jackley himself, LaFleur was the outstanding practitioner of this grueling turn. He spent 1895 and the six subsequent seasons with Ringling Brothers (Fig. 7).

The Gaskell & Mundy Carnival Company hired him for 1904 and 1905. In 1906 he was with the Carl Hagenbeck show in Mexico. In 1907 he introduced a small Mexican dog into his act, which jumped from the top of the ladder with him. Nineteen-ten and 1911 saw them on Adam Forepaugh & Sells Brothers (Fig. 8), and in 1912 they returned to Ringling. In 1915 LaFleur trans-

ferred to Sells-Floto-Buffalo Bill, and then spent two seasons on Hagenbeck-Wallace. He was off the road in 1918, and performed for the last time in the 1919 season with Downie's Walter L. Main Circus. LaFleur retired in September 1919, citing back trouble, which after thirty seasons of drops is certainly understandable. He was forty-six years old at the time. He died in Cranston, Rhode Island, in 1941.

Over the years, there were other practitioners of the Jackley Drops. None of them achieved the fame of Jackley, Parento or LeFleur, but certain it is that they deserve mention in an article such as this. The Holloway Brothers, Art and Max, of Birnamwood, Wisconsin used a twenty-foot ladder in the 1890's. This smaller height was made necessary in hall shows and on stages. Sam Burt, "The King of the Ladder," appeared with John Robinson in

1899; Ben Lucier was available to managers in 1909; Berre and Hicks, a husband and wife team, dates unknown, appear in various sources; we previously mentioned Leon de Rousseau in 1954.

Fig. 8. Special paper featuring Joe LaFleur, Forepaugh-Sells 1910. From *New York Clipper*.



The jolt which the arms, back and shoulders sustained in the Jackley Drops would, on the surface, indicate a short career for an acrobat, yet, as we've seen, some of them had long careers. Turning a somersault or two after striking the low platform, and landing on one's feet would seem to be icing on the cake, yet Nathan Jackley often bounded from the ground to the shoulders of an understander as an added and exciting of Jackley's fame as the originator, and LeFleur's as a longtime practitioner of the art were justly earned.

Credit must be given to Steve Gossard and Fred Dahlinger, Jr. for their assistance in researching this article.

Frank A. Robbins

a most successful failure

PART ELEVEN

By Robert Sabia

1908--all in the family. Staggered and disappointed as he must have been at the end of the 1907 season with the requisite sell-off of his beloved circus, we know the "Governor" well enough to firmly believe that this circumstance was viewed as merely another obstacle in the path to eventual success. There was a modicum of residue from the closed show that could provide the basis for another foray into the malaise of circusdom. The year was not 1905 but 1908 and with this continuum of time his two sons, Charles and Frank Jr., had matured into young but experienced showmen. Mattie was still at his side and daughter, Winona was fast growing into a show woman of the first order. Even son Milton was entering his teen years and could contribute good and valuable services when on summer vacation. Frank A. then had the makings of a loyal and competent circus management team on board within the family itself and at the ready.

However undesirable, the first order of business was the sale of the essence of the 1907 show. *Variety's* issue of December 14th (1907) confirmed the report that the show was being offered. It recognized that in addition to Robbins, Fred Beckman, Louis Cooke and Edward Arlington had financial interests in the show. This publication followed on February 8th with the news that the Frank A. Robbins circus definitely would not be on the road in 1908. It reported that Mr. Arlington, who held a small interest in the property, purchased the holdings of Messrs. Robbins, Cooke and Beckman. The purchase price was unknown. Mr. Arlington would merge the show

with the 101 Ranch show in which he was a half owner. The making available of the Robbins' equipment was Mr. Arlington's contribution to the corporate assets thereby providing the basis for his ownership role. It will be recalled that the 101 Ranch show was introduced in a very limited tour in 1907, spending much of it in Norfolk, Virginia, at the 1907 Jamestown Exposition. It is not known whether Arlington's equipment contribution included both the train and the wagons, etc., but whatever it was, little if anything was left for Mr. Robbins in his start-up inventory of the 1908 Frank A. Robbins Circus. In his writing of the history of the 101 Ranch Wild West (*Bandwagon*, Jan./Feb. 1969 et seq.), Chang Reynolds noted that "... Edward Arlington sent the first section of railroad cars from New York City on March 15. The twenty-two cars had been rebuilt and overhauled by the Pennsylvania Railroad in their Jersey City shops." It is a coincidence worthwhile for consideration that the fifteen cars available from the Robbins' inventory were also located in Jersey City. Further food for thought is a letter dated February 5 from Mr.

Robbins to Louis Cooke which forwarded policies from a Mr. Stanley. It is suspected these were insurance policies on the proffered railroad equipment that no longer would be required with its sale. The sale of the Robbins show to the 101 Ranch show

was also reported in the *Billboard* of February 22nd. In all probability this was in fact the case.


Robbins newspaper ad used in 1908. Author's collection.

Now what: no equipment, little money, diminished outlook. Not a rosy picture even for the ever optimistic Frank A. However, all was not lost. Promised help surfaced from an unexpected quarter. One of the significant problems during the 1907 season was the direct competition from Walter L. Main's Great Fashion Plate Shows. Main's routing preceding the Robbins' tour for extended periods greatly impacted the business garnered by Robbins. It made little difference that Robbins presented an excellent program while Main's offerings were meager at best.

The rule that the first show in does the business was confirmed in spades. *Variety* reported on January 11th that Mr. Main would be combining with Mr. Robbins for the 1908 season. Main's parade equipment

WILL EXHIBIT IN
OXFORD PA
Thursday Aug. 27
1908

FRANK A.
ROBBINS
NEW ALL
FEATURE SHOWS
A CIRCUS THAT IS A CIRCUS



THE DIVE OF DEATH

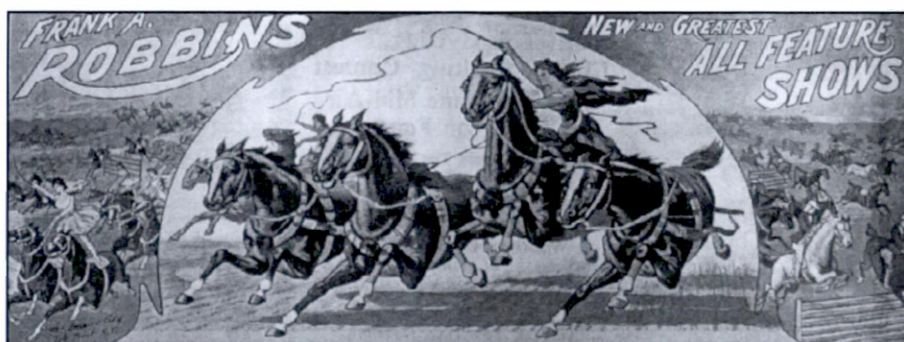
TRIBUNAL OF NATIONS SPECTACLE OF HISTORICAL INTEREST. A MILITARY ENSEMBLE REPRODUCING LIFE LIKE NAPOLEON, DUKE OF WELLINGTON AND GEO. WASHINGTON.

MENAGERIE JUMBO HIPPODROME 50 CAGES AND ELEPHANTS. JERUSALEM, THE GIANT EGYPTIAN CAMEL. ROMAN RACES.

60 OTHER PERFORMERS IN BIG NEW FEATURE ACTS. 6C
PARADE AT 10 A. M. DAILY RAIN OR SHINE.

and the Power elephants would be utilized and the privileges would be managed by Mr. Main himself. The message here is that in early January some, if not all, of the Robbins 1907 equipment was still available. For whatever reason this merger never took place. Mr. Main dropped out of the picture within a few weeks. It may have negated the apparent sale of the Robbins' inventory to the 101 Show.

In the February 1 issue of the *Billboard*, it was announced that Frank A. Robbins was contemplating putting out a 200 horse wagon show. Mr. Robbins expressed the opinion that while some railroads were very fair, others charged a rate from sixty to eighty per cent of the cost of transporting a three train show to move a one train show. More often than not, license fees were the same. As such, a wagon show held greater prospects of being successful than a small railier. This was motivation enough to put out a large wagon circus. So it was settled then--the 1908 offering would be an overland one. Not hardly! About a month later *Variety* wrote "(a)fter all Frank A. Robbins will probably go out again this season with a railroad show. Mr. Robbins is considering the renting of cars enough to carry a small circus and taking it over his old territory on the rails. A disinclination to subject his family to the rigors of a wagon tour is the showman's reason for a change of plan. He will begin to collect the equipment for the new show immediately, the old Frank A. Robbins' paraphernalia being turned over to the Miller Bros. '101 Ranch' on March 15." During the same time frame the "Bergen Amusement Company" came into existence. Bergen is the county in northeastern New Jersey. It is also the name of a park area in the southern section of Bayonne, merely a few miles from the old Robbins' winter quarters located in Jersey City. Whatever the basis for the name, a corporation was established pursuant to the New Jersey Statutes for the purpose of providing amusement to the public. The principal office for the business was at 239 Washington Street in Jersey City. The corporation was capitalized at \$25,000 divided into



250 shares at a par value of \$100. Shares issued were 40 to Frank A. Robbins, 5 to Frank A. Robbins, Jr. and 5 to Charles A. Robbins. The articles of incorporation were duly executed and filed on March 21. What better place than to establish a "family" business than Jersey City. Even better than Brooklyn. The die were cast with consequences that were not easily foreseeable at that time and place.

In order to meet any reasonable opening date, Frank A. had to move rapidly to assemble the rail and physical equipment necessary to embark upon a tour. In the April 18th issue of *Variety*, further clarification on the possible source of money and equipment was provided. "Frank A. Robbins has again shifted his plans for the coming Summer. The new arrangement contemplates a union with Sautelle, the combined show opening in Passaic, New Jersey April 26. The outfit will travel on rails, being transported in eight cars. The corporation which formerly operated the Robbins property dissolved recently, some of the equipment being purchased by Eddie Arlington for use with the '101 Ranch' Wild West exhibition. Sautelle has been running a wagon show." Previously, in the March 8th *Billboard*, it was stated that Sig Sautelle had sold his interest in the Cummins Wild West to Walter L. Main. The reference in *Variety* regarding Sautelle's running a wagon show is not clear to this writer. The introduction of Sig Sautelle may have been a source of the problems between Frank A. Sr. and Jr. However it does not appear that Mr. Sautelle took any active role in managing the show. By a letter from Otto Ringling to his brothers in early 1909 (to be discussed in detail at the appropriate time), it is evident that some unidentified equipment

Frank A. Robbins Circus lithograph. Pfening Archives.

came from the Bridgeport quarters. This paraphernalia was paid for by a 50% cash down payment at the time of acquisition with the remainder to be paid at a later time.

Even at this late date Frank A.'s reputation in the circus business fostered assemblage of a highly experienced staff to support this initiative. This staff included Frank A. as manager; Jr. as secretary and treasurer; son Charles, assistant manager and vice president; Wesley Pike, assistant treasurer; Mrs. F. A. Robbins (repeater), manager candy stands; George Ross (repeater), legal adjuster; Joseph Hughes (repeater), press agent; Charles Lowry, general agent; S. Lofland, steward; Fred Markle, head porter and privilege car manager; John Stanton, boss property man, later also trainmaster; John Welsh, (later John Hargraves), boss canvasman; James Maloy, master of transportation; Ike Smith (repeater), chandelier man; and Prof. Saldene, manager side show. W. E. Sands was advertising car manager. He was abetted by fourteen men in putting up paper.

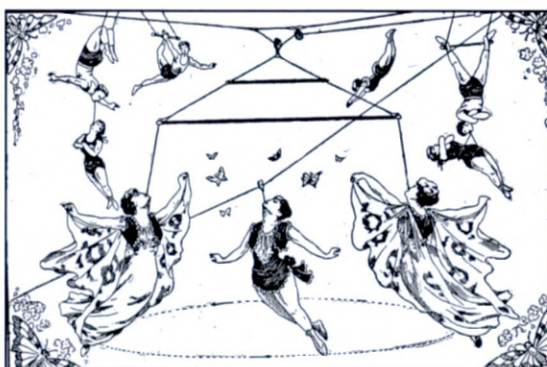
Presented in one ring, the program opened with a tournament. The performers in the order scheduled on opening night included Millie Clio, singing clown; Misses Lane and Steteh, aerial act; K. Haskimoto, Japanese juggler; Johnnie Rooney, bareback riding including somersaulting from one horse to another; William Marks, principal bareback act; clowns, Marks, LaBelle, Mandy, Redford, Kilduff, Jenieke, and Hunting Moose; the Six Flying Duns, casting act; Nebraska Bill, rough riding; clown number; Charles Carlos, hand balancing; Carlo's performing dogs; Josie Ashton and Johnnie

Rooney, principal act; William Marks and Clara La Belle, carrying act; Newman Troupe, bicyclists; Misses Gray and La Belle, menage act; Mons. Tessles, swinging wire; Fred Noles, tight wire walking; Belle Clark, menage act; Nebraska Bill's, talking horse; Kichi Hashimoto, rope slide; Mons Tessier, balancing trapeze; William Sukes, balancing trapeze; Prof. Carlo's trained ponies; baseball by clowns Marks and La Belle; and Koster, aerial La Chelle. The program concluded with wild west races with Arizona Bill, Broncho Gus, Wyoming Jack, George Kirch, Nebraska Bill, Wild Bert, Bessie Land, Nebraska Nell, Clara Moore, Chief Big Feather and Flaming Arrow Swiftwind. The equestrian director was Harry Koster and William Sullivan was the announcer. Professor Maselle lead a band of twenty-four members (most assuredly greatly overstated). Professor Bush's balloon ascension was the free act. If this rostrum of performers and the band numbers appear to be overwhelming in terms of an eight car show, you can bet that they are. It may be this was a beefed up opening program or just an aggrandized one for the purpose of impressing the folks in the business. We don't know. We just know that the nut is always very important and in particular for a show traveling on the edge. Practicality dictates here.

In Professor Saldene's annex were Miss Devere, sword swallower; May Lee, handcuff queen; Prof Bodonaire, magician; Olivia Griffin, mind reader; Nora Gibson, tattooed lady; Lillian Gillis, snake charmer; Herr Bolton, strongman; Saldine, Punch and Judy; The Heads, musical act; and Paul Thompson, illusions. Anderson's colored band furnished the music.

Right at the onset of the season some confusion exists. On May 9th, the *Clipper* reported that the show opened in the Greenville section of Jersey City on May 2nd. The next week the *Clipper* further reported that the show played Jersey City (presumably the Marion section) on Monday (5/4) and Tuesday (5/5) to capacity business. The brief article also stated that advertising was lim-

ited to window lithos. No newspaper ads were used. This latter statement was confirmed by a search of the Jersey City newspapers for ads to no avail. The alleged early route also included Rutherford on May 7th and Hoboken on May 8th and 9th. Nothing was found in those newspapers regarding these three dates. The dilemma is created by a press release in both the *Billboard* and *Clipper* several weeks later wherein it was stated that the opening was on May 8th in Greenville. So a mystery exists relative to the tour's start date which probably won't be solved by this writer.



Wherever the show was during initial stands, it probably got there by traveling overland. The distances between various sections of Jersey City, Hoboken, Arlington and Rutherford are small and well within the capability of the show stock to reach utilizing city and county streets. Beginning with Haverstraw, New York (5/11), the use of the railroad was required; that Hudson River port location being about 50 miles north of Jersey City. Newspaper advertising featured the 1906 ad format. Continuing north along the Hudson River, the circus played the large town of Newburgh the next day. There was a short parade. Although the circus was observed as being a small one, the one ring performance greatly pleased the locals. Less pleasing were the pickpockets that accompanied the show. A local bystander averted an accident when a trailing circus wagon broke loose on the way to the runs. This young man grabbed the tongue of the runaway wagon and directed it to a safe stop thereby narrowly avoiding an oncoming large automobile. A 1905 newspaper ad

was used in Newburgh. Continuing up the Hudson toward Albany, port towns of Saugerties, Caskill and Ravena were successfully played before concluding the first traveling week at the large town of Schenectady (5/16). Given the new show configuration, no unusual problems were experienced and all seemed to be proceeding as planned.

Heading west along the Mohawk River, Robbins scheduled Amsterdam (5/18), arriving there on Sunday. The parade began on time at 10:30 on Monday morning. There was a lead-off bandwagon drawn by an eight horse team. There was a strange statement in the local paper which noted "... (t)he tunes were few and far between, there being some little apprehension as to the training of the local horses, and it was the purpose of the circus management to avoid run-aways." This may have meant the show was renting local teams to move the equipment to and from the runs and for the parade. On the other hand, it may have meant a number of new teams had recently been purchased and

were being broken in at that time. It also may have meant nothing at all! The article further noted a number of cage wagons followed. Clowns and cowboys entertained the crowds with their art forms. After a couple of ponies the parade concluded with another bandwagon. All-in-all, the parade did not impress. However, the performance did and gave general satisfaction. An admission of 25 cents was charged and deemed worth it. The old homestead of Herkimer followed Fort Plain, both towns giving good reviews and business. The city of Utica was use to large circuses and found the parade offering of Frank A. Robbins to be lacking. The two open dens displayed a large goat or something of that nature and a bear. There were a couple of near gold and near silver chariots, seven people on horseback, two little ponies and two bandwagons. That was the whole of it. No elephant was carried. Nevertheless, the performance pleased the capacity houses. It's good to be first in. It was not such a good stand for Robbins' employee, Eleralle Gilpin. During the night this gentleman died at a Utica hospital of

peritonitis. The coroner had to subpoena Frank A. Robbins who was at the next day's stand of Rome, to return to Utica for the purpose of identifying Mr. Gilpin. The local Sheriff found Mr. Robbins and accompanied him back to Utica. Oneida (5/23), located midway between Utica and Syracuse, closed another successful week of good business, fine weather and short jumps.

Heading north, Robbins played Camden (5/25) to winning note. Almost capacity business at night followed a full house in the afternoon. Good entertainment value was the consensus of the locals although the menagerie continued to receive its deserved derogatory remarks; to wit: "The only redeeming feature of the menagerie was the limited attractions." The press liked the music and the free balloon ascension. Specifically mentioned was Herr Herzog and his ponies and dogs, considered to be the best ever performed in Camden. This is the first reference to Herr Herzog who must have been a recent addition to the program. It is presumed that he is the same Hugo Herzog who starred in the 1906 edition of the Robbins Circus. Of course there was the appropriate reference to the gambling swindles operating on the show lot. In some cases the police forced the slicky

boys to return their ill-gained sums. In other situations the crooks could not be found so the loser paid dearly for his stupidity. Pulaski on the shores of Lake Ontario was followed by Adams (5/27) where a light afternoon house was offset by a near full in the evening. Again Herr Herzog was described as the best in the business, the menagerie demeaned for displaying only a sleepy bear (one wonders where the goat was when you really needed him), a fine free balloon ascension and parachute jump about 7 o'clock, and the snide gamblers who consistently beat the locals playing their own game. Cape Vincent (5/28), at the confluence of the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario, was next. Weather continued good and was reflected at the box

office. A somewhat longer jump of 50 miles took the show to Lowville, with shorter mileage required to visit Carthage (5/30) and Harrisville (6/1). A turn to the northwest took the outfit to the St. Lawrence River and the Canadian border at Clayton (6/2). Good business and weather continued at Gouverneur (6/4). Short changing ticket selling artists cheated many of their rightful amounts. In those cases where the deficiency was not immediately noticed, there was no rectification offered. Although 1906 ads continued to be used (e.g. at Canton (6/5) and Potsdam (6/6), press release information was amended to include background information on Hugo Herzog. Unfortunately this information was also from 1906 as it discussed Prof. Herzog's stallion act rather than the ponies and dogs presentation actually made.



Special paper used by the Robbins circus. Pfening Archives.

The show progressed in an easterly direction on the New York/Canadian border, reaching Rouses Point (6/12) at the junction of Canada, New York and Vermont, before heading south to Plattsburgh (6/13). It continued south along the western shore of Lake Champlain until reaching Ticonderoga (6/18). It then crossed over to the border of New York and Vermont picking up both Granville and Salem (6/20). There was a very short Sunday run of 10 miles to Cambridge where the Monday date gave only fair business to so-so reviews. The ponies and dogs, rough riding and Japanese acrobat received high marks but the

remainder of the performance was not up to expectations. About this time the annex manager Saldene and mind reader Olivia Griffin left to join Leon Washburn's Circus at Saybrook, Connecticut. Another possible change in the performers rostrum is reflected in a press release for the Altamont date (6/27) which discusses the Flying Ellet Family being on the show. The Ellet's were a feature on the 1905 and 1906 shows. It could be this release was merely a carryover from 1906 and probably was. Altamont was also the site where flim-flaming did not always work as the schemers' intended. In one case a ticket seller cheated a local out of \$56. This was not reported to the police until the show departed for its next stand, Cobleskill (6/29). The Altamont's sheriff, carrying an arrest warrant, the victim and another local traveled to Cobleskill on

Monday and quickly found their man. He was placed under arrest and taken to the Cobleskill's police headquarters. The perpetrator paid the amount in question, all court expenses, and the expenses incurred by the Altamont citizens for their round-trip to Cobleskill. Even on the Robbins circus, crime didn't always pay.

A long weekday jump took the circus to Sidney, closing out the month of June. The next day the long New York schedule temporarily ended with a date at Afton. After opening at Laneboro, Pennsylvania (7/2), the show journeyed to Carbondale, just north of Scranton. A derailment occurred as the train was entering the Carbondale yards around 3:40 a.m. A defective switch caused a flat car to leave the tracks. It took some time to realign the flat with the rail. In an action that would have made the Clintonion spin doctors proud, press agent Hughes advised the local newspaper that the circus parade would have been much larger had the derailment not occurred. Only one injury was sustained by a circus canvasman. OK business was had despite the shortened parade. The

next day was Independence Day and it was spent at Honesdale. A fine afternoon was followed by a light house at night. The paper reported that 9 cars were required to haul the show (1 advance with 8 back?). The diminutive menagerie of a couple of black bears and a cage of monkeys, was considered to be out of sync with the quality of the performance. Leaving the greater Scranton area at Nanticoke (7/8), Frank A. continued west in the hard coal country visiting Berwick (7/9) with only fair business resulting and Bloomsburg (7/10). At this latter location, a remarkable revelation was reported in the local press. Under the headline "NO OCCASION FOR FALSEHOODS," it was reported that "(t)he mystery has been cleared. After giving different reasons for the failure of their parade to appear in about every town in which they have recently showed, the press agent of the Robbins' show in a letter to the *Press* expressing indignation that this should have given notice to the people not to expect a parade and also chronicling the story of the way Henry Newman of Berwick, was mulcted of his \$35. In six years' experience in the show business he never received such treatment he writes. All of which is very sad.

"After laying the absence of a parade in Bloomsburg to the long pull, and giving the same story in Berwick, with late arrival at Pittston as the excuse, these and a few other reasons at Nanticoke, he now comes forward and says that their parade wardrobe was ruined in a recent wreck on the D. and H. and they haven't anything to parade with. That may be the reason and it may not. If it is the fact they would have done far better to have told the truth to the people instead of allowing many to come from outlying towns to witness a parade that never took place nor for which there was any intention of making preparations.

"Up at Nanticoke the other night a wildly excited mob disrobed one of the London Gaiety 'Girls' whom they found to be a man and set fire to the straw which was used in making his feminine curves. All in all, the show was just about the worst that ever struck Bloomsburg that claimed to be anything." It appears that Mr.

Hughes was hoisted with his own petard.

There were three more dates in north central Pennsylvania, exiting the State at Tioga (7/14). It was back to New York for a couple of weeks before heading south for good. Watkins (7/15) opened the run with the show still using 1906 press releases. Continuing in the Finger Lakes Region, Penn Yan was next. This town may be recalled as the winter quarters of the James M. Cole Circus during the 1940's. Elmira,



Waverly and Corning followed. The large town of Elmira turned out two good houses to appreciative audiences. In Waverly the focus was on the gambling devices in operation. A wheel and a dice cup were active throughout the afternoon in spite of the fact that there were two policemen on the show grounds. The policemen claimed that they were in the side show tent from time to time but did not see any gambling devices. This was probably true as the gambling apparatus was a knock-down operation which was quickly dismantled when a warning of a pending visit was given.

A fair amount of money was lost to the slicky boys. At Bath (7/21), rain prevented a large attendance. Neither the parade nor the performance impressed. Frank A. headed in a generally westerly direction playing the small villages of Mt. Morris (7/23), Nunda (7/24) and Belfast (7/25) before reaching Olean for a Monday stand (7/27). Again in a small city, there was good attendance at both performances which garnered positive reviews. The local gendarmes must have been vigilant as no complaints regarding gambling were registered. Salamanca closed out the extensive New York tour to good reviews.

Just when it happened is not known, but the breakup of the family

was apparent when *Variety* (8/8) reported that Frank A. Robbins, Jr.'s Nebraska Bill's Wild West was an additional feature at the New Palisades Amusement Park on the Jersey side of the Hudson River. The show opened on August 1st. Obviously, when Frank Jr. left his father's show, he took Nebraska Bill and his ensemble with him. It is suspected that son Charles also left. The rift between the family members was never mended. As events evolved in 1909 and in later years, the rift was filled with bitterness.

The show quickly dropped into Pennsylvania making some fairly long jumps to reach Tidioute (7/29), Emlenton (7/30) and East Brady (7/31). August opened just east of Pittsburg at Freeport which was followed by Vandergrift and Saltsburg in that general area before drifting east again toward the central part of the state at Barnesboro (8/5). Virtually nothing was being reported in the local press at these stands and nothing at all in the trade publications throughout much of the season after the opening stands in New Jersey. Hollidaysburg, near Altoona, was visited on August 8th. The circus continued to use material from the 1906 tour in their newspaper releases including snippets on the Flying Ellet Family and the Baker Bicycle Five. At Lykens (8/13) the show was a couple of weeks ahead of Martin Downs's growing Cole Bros. United Shows. The latter circus placed much larger ads in the local papers but did not use "Wait" language.

Continuing east, Robbins spent almost two weeks in Pennsylvania Dutch country finally exiting that area at Downingtown (8/21). Ardmore (now a Philadelphia suburb) was next. At Media (8/24), the circus was required to call upon the railroad mechanics who were made busy repairing circus railroad cars that suffered a wreck entering the freight yards in the southern part of that town. The Media Carriage Works called in a work force on Sunday to repair three circus wagons that were thrown from the flats in the wreck. All repairs were accomplished in a timely manner so that the show departed on schedule to West Chester late Monday night. A

look behind these facts evidences some healthy news. While it may have been a necessity to repair the rail cars, the repair of the wagons may have been addressed in a different manner; such as the repair effected by the circus employees. The fact that Frank A. had the financial wherewithal to have the local wagon repairers called in on a Sunday indicates that the season had produced at least some profits and perhaps good profits to date. This was good news indeed. The show was probably going to survive. A local Media citizen sponsored over 500 hundred children from a local training school to circus tickets at the afternoon performance. The children especially enjoyed the clowning from their reserved seats location. Happy faces were plentiful the next day at West Chester where excellent business was experienced. The month's journey throughout Pennsylvania culminated with a stand at Oxford (8/27). This town will be remembered as the winter quarters of the many Al Wheeler's circuses.

Elkton, Maryland (8/28) was the first date south of the Mason-Dixon line. Then the Delmarva Peninsula was invaded again with Middletown, Delaware (8/29) and Chestertown, Maryland (8/31) as the initial stands. Centreville (9/1) was a great day with very large crowds in fine weather despite competition with an ongoing street carnival. The local press commented positively on the quality of the performance. The route continued in a southerly direction until Salisbury (9/7) and nearby Berlin (9/8) were reached. Then the direction was reversed and the circus marched back up the Peninsula playing Milford, Delaware on September 12th. There a local farmer, aged 65, visited the lot with \$90. He was spotted by a circus hanger-on who approached him and asked if the farmer had any money. The farmer responded that he had around \$90 whereupon the hanger-on said he didn't believe it. The farmer produced the wad and the hanger-on asked to count it. He did and instead of returning it, the hanger-on lifted a sidewall, dashed under it and wasn't



Illustration from a Robbins courier. Pfening Archives,

to be seen again. Amazingly, the naive farmer relayed this episode to the local press which reported the incident on the front page of its weekly. The farmer was identified by name in the article, which name may have been subsequently changed to Farmer Jerk--first in dealing with the hanger-on and secondly for relating his stupidity to the Milford Chronicle. Delaware City, Delaware (9/16) closed out the successful Delmarva tour.

Heading south again but this time on the western side of the magnificent Chesapeake Bay, the show picked up Havre de Grace, Maryland (9/17), where the Susquehanna River empties into the Chesapeake. Weather was a bit nasty at Alexandria, Virginia (9/24) resulting in a soft lot and a mired pole wagon. The circus then wheeled in a westerly direction, reaching Woodstock, Virginia in the Shenandoah Valley on September 28th. Here, the weather became downright ugly again blowing down the big top in a severe rain and wind storm shortly after the early show was completed. No injuries were sustained but the night performance was canceled. However, the circus was labeled as having the worst set of gamblers, pickpockets and thieves that ever visited Woodstock. Two thieves were fined \$15 and \$10 by the local Judge which fine was paid by the show's manager, a Mr. Ross, (the legal adjuster). Continuing in the Shenandoah, Winchester (10/1) provided a dispute regarding a local ordinance requiring a \$50 fee if a parade was given. Frank A. was not about to pay this fee especially given the dubious

value of his parade. As a result, the circus band drove through the streets playing its instruments and a couple of horsemen announced the features of the circus. The circus drew well in the afternoon but only light attendance at night. The lot was very muddy from recent rains. The management indicated that it recently suffered severe losses during problem weather and much circus property had been ruined.

The management also stated that they would be receiving eight more railroad cars the next day at Charles Town, West Virginia together with much new equipment. Sounds like press agent gibberish to me. Not too surprising, the local press in Charles Town did not report a doubling of size of this circus. Martinsburg, West Virginia (10/5) turned in two good crowds to appreciative audiences. The southern route ended at Ellicott, Maryland (10/8). Then the show proceeded to seven season concluding stands in New Jersey. The 1908 season wrapped up in Princeton on October 17th and returned to its Jersey City winter quarters. Rehabilitation of the equipment commenced immediately.

On one hand the season was a success. The show survived and apparently had some bullion in the treasury. Slow growth was on the horizon and the prospects for success were real. It seems that Sig Sautelle was reimbursed in full for his investment. He was not a factor in the future but remained a close friend of Frank A. The second family of Frank A.'s remained intact and were all deeply involved in the circus itself. On the other hand, the first family of Frank A's was finished as a unit. Both sons (Charles and Jr.) remained active in the circus business throughout their respective lives. In the case of Jr., it was a very long life and a fairly successful one. So what started as "all in the family," ended with a series of perceived broken promises and lifelong hard-feelings. Does this represent a success? It depends upon who is setting the standards. Knowing Frank A.'s, strong family orientation, it doesn't seem that he would consider it to be a success at all.

Side Lights On The Circus Business

PART TWENTY-ONE

By David W. Watt

Editor's note. The dates listed are the days the article appeared in the Janesville, Wisconsin Gazette.

February 20, 1915

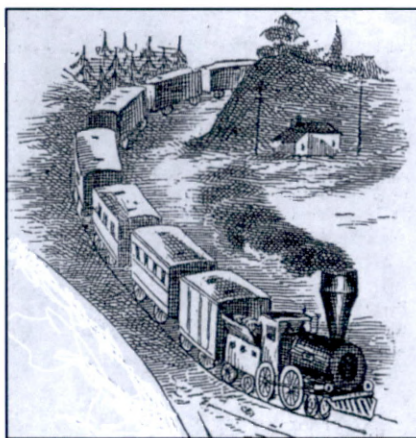
In the many years that I was with the Adam Forepaugh show, I said to myself, "There is the greatest leader of men and the bravest man that I ever knew." And more than once said also, "What a great general the governor would make." We all called him "governor." During that time I saw him in many trying places more than owe, when it looked as though it was impossible for him to get by the tangles; but it was always under these conditions that he was the calmest, and always to the front. He never asked a man to undertake or do anything that he would not dare to do himself.

At Johnstown, Pa., in 1887, when we were surrounded by a mob bent on tearing down our tents and overturning the cages, Adam Forepaugh was in the midst of the fracas and doing the directing. At Fremont, Nebraska, when the tents were struck by lightning and in a few minutes burned to the ground, and 29 elephants went on a stampede in every direction, one found Adam Forepaugh in the thickest of it all and never excited, but always cool and directing everything as though it might be of an every day occurrence.

But it was on the 12th day of October, 1889, that Adam Forepaugh for the first time weakened. It was there that the show closed for the season and while the band played *Home, Sweet Home*, the people in the dressing room had quietly worked up a little extra at the closing of the show at this time. They had practiced singing *Home, Sweet Home* and *Shall We Gather at the River*, and when the

last act went on that evening, I was delegated to go to the front door and bring Adam Forepaugh and his wife in to see the closing act of the last day. When they entered the big top, hundreds of people cheered them and there was something like three or four hundred inside of the hippodrome track and when the band played *Home, Sweet Home*, they all joined in singing with the band and closed by singing *Shall We Gather at the River*; and it was then that Adam Forepaugh for the first time weakened and the tears rolled down his cheeks as he and his wife found their way back to the front door.

Little did anyone think at that



time that this would be the last closing of the great show that Adam Forepaugh would ever take part in. The show was the pride of his life, and the one thing that he had spent so many years of the best of his life to build up, yet on the 24th of the following January, he had to die and leave it all.

All of us have seen trained horses, mules and ponies, but did you ever stop to think that all these animals in a way educate themselves, and experience teaches them many

things that they are seldom given credit for? In the days of the old wagon shows when we would be on the road all night, perhaps at daylight in the morning, you could look ahead for a mile or two and see a town; and while the horses would have to be urged along for most of the night at least, let them look ahead and see a town and they seemed at once to think that that was their haven of rest and they would all muster up extra courage, take a new hold of the bit and soon be in the town. But if it happened to be one that we had to pass through and that the town that we had to show in was still seven or eight miles ahead, the drivers would all have to urge them harder than ever until they would get a mile or more out of the town. The horses would all seem to think that perhaps the lot was on the other side and when the next town would come in sight, it would be the same thing over again. It was a known fact in the wagon show business, that all horses that had been in the show for any length of time, when a town came in sight in the morning, they were always in a hurry to get there, for they seemed to know that they must make the town before they could get their breakfast or take a rest.

In an interview with a reporter of one of the Chicago dailies a few days ago, Martin J. Sweitzer, father of Robert Sweitzer, who is a democratic candidate for mayor of Chicago, gave the reporter quite a history of his life from the time he left Germany when still a small boy up to the present time. During the interview he told the reporter that three or four years of the most interesting part of his life had been spent in the show business. The first he had traveled with was



Courier advertising the Hippodrome Winter Circus. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.

the Levi J. North circus, and after leaving that show came back to Chicago and for some years was connected with the J. H. McVicker Theatre. He said during that time he had made many friends that proved to be valuable acquaintances later in his life, so that he never regretted the few years he had put in with the circus.

On Saturday, Jan. 24, the great Hippodrome building in New York was opened for a few weeks run with a real circus. As all the circus people were idol waiting for the springtime to come, it was an easy matter to get many of the famous performers who were glad to have a few weeks mid-winter's engagement. The show had a feature of clowns and had something like fifty of the best in the country, including the Foxes, the Miaco's and Willy Marks, who was with the Burr Robbins show years ago and for some years made Janesville his home.

After being dark for a short time, this greatest of American amusement resorts opened with a matinee on Saturday, Jan. 23, with one of the best circuses seen in New York. While circus acts have often formed part of an entertainment at the "Hip," this is the first time that an entire bill of tented attractions held the stage here. The great playhouse was really crowded, and it was a pleasure to see so many children

present and enjoying themselves.

The great apron of the stage had been extended out by at least three feet by adding a platform, and the stage was made to represent the interior of a huge tent. In the rear had been erected the bandstand. The circus has many thrills and several genuine sensations. Three and two rings are used, and during most of the acts about a dozen chorus girls stand in the rear of the stage, about six feet apart to lend additional tone. The clowns were very funny, and many of the stunts offered were new. One of the best things offered was a burlesque on the Hippodrome's ballet. We do not know who laughed the most, the children or their elders. The grand pageant and tournament was a beautiful sight to behold. The huge stage presented a scene of great activity. In addition to the regular circus attaches, there were many of the regular Hippodrome chorus girls and men, garbed in costumes of regal splendor.

If the big crowds present at the two performances at the opening on Saturday can be take as a criterion, the circus at the "Hip" is going to be a big success. It is sure to make the Barnum show at the Madison Square Garden in March twice as hard to get "over."

Some of the Hippodrome acts, including Jack Oliver and the Weavers, paid a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Bert Cole, at Tottenville, S.I., last Sunday.

From the winter quarters of the Smith Greater Shows, in Augusta, Ga., comes the news of a free-for-all battle between four leopards and two lions from the wild animal show, which resulted in the death of Kruger, one of the prize beasts of the outfit. Despite the efforts of armed attendants and trainers, the animals fought in the arena for almost half an hour and were not subdued until chemical fire extinguishes were put to use, the fumes of which overcame them, and they were driven back to their cages.

February 27, 1915

On Saturday last, February 20, the barrier fell at San

Francisco and the great race of the Panama Exposition was on; and it is fair to say that ever since the date of the great exposition was fixed showmen from all over the world, not only in this country but all over Europe, sat up and took notice of the coming exposition. And hundreds of them said in their own minds, "That will be the Mecca of the world for showmen. And hundreds of them immediately commenced to make arrangements to be there with their shows on the opening day.

Past experiences of showmen at the Centennial in Philadelphia in 1876 and at the great world's fair in Chicago in 1893 seemed to cut no figure; their only thought being that [if] they could get to San Francisco with any kind of a show and in any kind of a location, that would be all that they would ask for. But past history as far back as the Centennial at Philadelphia tells a sad story of experiences of many shows and show people. At Philadelphia at the Centennial Exposition in 1876, shows of all kinds from snake charmers, dog and pony shows, circuses and wild west.

Even the best theatres in Philadelphia suffered, for it seemed

Program of the Fall of Babylon.



that when the people had spent all day at the Centennial grounds they were ready to go to their hotels and to get rest. All the theatres there, including the Nixon, and Zimmerman, and the 8th Street Theatre, all of which had the highest class talent possible to secure, and yet had to be counted in on the losing end of the game. And as I recall it now, the only show that made any money at the Centennial was the Kiralfe Brothers, who for years had been the greatest spectacular producers in their line in the world.

At the Centennial they put on a beautiful spectacular play called *The Fall of Babylon*. This show was given in the large open field of about 10 acres, and as they only gave an evening show, it proved to a close rival to the Centennial exhibition. It was said that Kiralfe Brothers cleared up more than a quarter of a million dollars with the show that season. But they were about the only headliners as far as money making was concerned of any kind of a show at the Centennial. And then it was in 1893 [when] they fixed the date of the world's fair in Chicago, and showmen, forgetting their experiences at the Centennial, all began to make another stampede for Chicago.

The year before, James A. Bailey, manager of the Barnum & Bailey show, commenced to make arrangements to land in Chicago about the middle of August and open there, expecting to stay for the balance of the season. And long before the arrival of the great show on the lake front in Chicago, all the advance men and the bill cars ahead of the show were side-tracked in Chicago, expecting that they would remain there for the balance of the season. I was the guest of Mr. Bailey at the Barnum show the last three days of the opening week, and when I put in an appearance on Thursday afternoon, Mr. Bailey sat at the main entrance of the show and shook hands with me and said, "Dave, I am glad to see you for more than one reason." He immediately handed me tickets for a box which contained six chairs and said, "I want you to take that box for yourself and friends while you are in the city. Business is simply awful and we would be glad to see you fill up the box." But when I told him I was



Col. Joe Miller (center) was featured on this 101 Ranch 1915 poster.

alone, he said, "Well, bring some of your friends with you this evening."

It was only two or three days later that Mr. Bailey could see the hand writing on the wall, that plainly showed him that the show was going to be a failure in Chicago. The coming Monday the advance people were called together and number one advertising car was started for the country, and the others followed as soon as possible. And instead of spending the balance of the season on the lake front, the great Barnum show was sent out into the country to finish the season; which proved to be anything but a prosperous one, for the people seemed to say to themselves, "The world's fair for me. We can see a circus any old time." And thus it was that even the finest and best show in the country had to keep hopping scotching around and doing the best they could to fill in the season, which closed early in the year without very much money to the good.

So it is fair to say today that hundreds of showmen have managed to land their shows in San Francisco with any kind of a location that is possible for them to get, either inside the grounds, between the grounds and the city, or even around in town, as they all seem to think that any kind of an old location at the great Panama Exposition will make them plenty of money. Let us hope it may;

but judging from the past, I would not think well of their chances.

W. F. Cody, Buffalo Bill, has a contract with the managers of the exposition to put on the largest and best Indian show that money will buy; but this will be in a good location on the grounds, and backed up by the association and will undoubtedly be a money maker.

Joe Miller, of the 101 Ranch fame, also is putting on for the managers the greatest wild west show that money will buy, offering thousands of dollars in prizes for the best bronco riders, rope throwers, and anything in the wild west line. This show, too, will be in a good location . . . [and] will be certainly a winner.

A telegram received from Al G. Barnes last week was to the effect that there was no truth in the report that he had suffered the loss of any show property or animals in the recent storm at Venice, Cal. The location of the Barnes property is such that it is practically impossible for water to reach it. Mr. Barnes has just received a walrus from the Arctic region, which is said to be the only one in captivity. A number of other animals have been recently added to the menagerie, including two leopards, two camels, one tiger, and two full grown male lions.

James A. Madigan, of Eastport, Me., for years a circus troupier, has forsaken the white tops for the political game and is representing his city this winter in the Maine State Legislature. He is also officiating as postmaster for that body.

Muldoon, who is also city billposter at Eastport, started, in the circus game with Dan Rice, joining that show when a boy in Montreal. He did a dancing turn in the concert and afterwards traveled for years with the old Forepaugh show. In vaudeville, with a partner, the act was known as Mason and Mack. They toured the country for years. He finally settled in Eastport and has been manager of the opera house and conducted a moving picture theater for the past few years.

Jimmy Watson says, "Speaking of optimistic pitchmen, here is the record, all others to the contrary. In 1897 Johnny McIntosh, who sold everything from a collar button to a

house and lot, was struck by a rub-away horse in Silver Plume, Colo. he was taken into a doctor's office, and about that time a minister who was passing stopped in and, noticing the serious condition of Johnny, said, 'You are very badly hurt and if you have anything to say or any word you want sent to your family tell me now.' Poor Johnny understood. 'My inside pocket,' he said painfully. The minister felt a pocketbook and took it out. 'Is this what you want.' 'Yes,' was the faint reply. 'Open it. Here is a twenty dollar bill. Is that what you wanted asked the sky pilot. 'Yes,' sighed Johnny. 'What will I do with it. Then Johnny said in a whisper, 'Bet you the twenty I don't die. And he didn't."

March 6, 1915

In the middle 1880's, in company with Adam Forepaugh, Jr., we made a trip from Philadelphia to Baltimore for the purpose of engaging H. O. Messier for one of the big attractions with the show-to run against a horse in the hippodrome track. Henry Messier, as he was known in the business, was one of the big attractions of the country. He took part in all the big events at Madison Square Garden, New York, at Philadelphia, in fact in all the large cities, clear through to the coast, in what they called a six day go-as-you-please. This meant to walk or ran for six days and nights for the championship of the world. In these events the track men would gather from all over the world--England, France, and Scotland always being represented by their champions.

While Henry Messier, who was a Frenchman, was never champion, he was one of the best men in the country and always a dangerous rival; and in the big events, I never knew Henry to go out of a long contest of that kind worse than third. In all the big events he was either second or third. But Henry seemed to be unfortunate in a way, and, in the greatest race of the kind ever given, Henry was third in the field of seventy-six starters. This was in Madison Square Garden in New York. And [on] the opening night, every seat in the great building was occupied. And [for] the last two or three days of the event, thousands of standing room tickets

were sold. But one of Henry's knees got to troubling him along toward the last, and third money was the best he could get. But that amounted to a fortune. First money in that event was something over \$17,000, and as it was divided into several purses. Henry's amounted to several thousand.

Young Forepaugh and I were unable to secure Henry for the season for a stated salary of so much per week because he had been used to getting a good slice of the receipts, and no kind of a stated salary looked good to him. While, as I have said before, Henry Messier never was a world's champion, a few years later he was matched against the champions of the different countries at different times and there never was a world's champion that Henry Messier did not beat single handed. Yet in the big events, where they would always be fifty-two to seventy-five starters, Henry seemed to be the fall guy that would always meet with some kind of hard luck.

Last week I met a man on the street who carried me along for a

Animal trainer Adam Forepaugh, Jr.



time in conversation, and finally said, "Dave, I guess its no use. You don't seem to know me."

I said to him, "No. You have certainly got the best of me."

"Well," he said, "this is Henry Messier."

From that on, for some time Henry and I visited over the good times that we enjoyed together thirty years ago. Henry is now 53 years old, but carries his years lightly and would readily pass for a man less than 40. If a man is a good listener, Henry could certainly entertain him for a couple of hours and tell him many interesting stories of a six day go-as-you-please event, not only in this country but all over Europe. Henry was always a good mixer and never went back on a friend. And while that kind of entertainment lasted a few years, it soon got to be a pastime of the past. Henry had some money, a good education, and [was] a pleasant man to meet; so it was not hard for him to get a good position in another business. He is now traveling on the road for a large wholesale house and [has] a nice home in Milwaukee where he expects to spend the balance of his life. When he left me he assured me that some day during the coming summer he would drop into Janesville and be my guest for a day or two, when we would go back and rehearse the old days over again.

One of the most important positions around the circus, and especially one of the big ones, is equestrian driver. His business is to see that the show is started at two o'clock and kept going fast, and is out and over at 4 o'clock sharp. In order to do this, and especially with the big shows, he must have everything in readiness and have his acts, as the saying goes, "pass at the ring bank." This means that when one act is going out the other must pass them at the ring bank going in, so that there will not be a minute's wait. In order to do this kind of work he must be a leader of men and have absolute control over everyone in the dressing rooms. It is also his business, in conjunction with the boss property men, to place the trunks of the different performers and see that they do not occupy too much space; as where there are two or three hundred people, and every

one with a trunk, if you give those people, as a rule, the room they would want, it would take a dressing room as big as the big top to accommodate them. So that a man in a position like this must not only be up in the business but he must give those under him to understand that he is the boss.

Not so long ago I visited one of the big shows and spent much of my time in the dressing room where the equestrian director was known to be engaged to go to another show the coming year. As he was a high class equestrian director, his word would undoubtedly have a great deal of weight as to who would be his successor the coming year; and I could easily see that there were at least three rivals for the job for the coming year. These three men had been in the business for years and were all competent for the work; and they were all catering to the man that had held the job for some years- 'as they all knew that a good word from him to the manager would go a long way toward securing the prize. This position is always filled by a performer, not necessarily a high class one as far as his act might go in the ring, but one that can control the people and carry the show through without a hitch.

The best equestrian driver that I think I was ever with, with the Burr Robbins show, was in 1879. At the first rehearsal he took his book and made a schedule of the acts and called them all into the dressing room and told them where their act would come in, and what act would open the show, and the one that would close it. This, you can readily see, does not always please the average performer. Any high class performer is always glad to open the show for two reasons. One is that the show is supposed to open with a headliner, and the other is that it gets him out of the ring early in the afternoon so that there is time to do something else if necessary. But these are often changed around, for I never knew a performer that wanted his act to be the last one on the list,

as this always kept them in the dressing room until the close of the show; and then many of the people would start home and more or less would never see the act.

Yet if you have a strong feature, it is many times kept until the last to close the show with in order to hold the people to the last and send them home with a good impression, which was thought must last longer than if they had seen it earlier in the show.... So you can readily see that a good equestrian director is of vital importance to the great shows.

Among great equestrian directors of their day were James Melville, who was a great rider; Robert Stickney, another rider; Bud Gorman, who was the equestrian director last year with Hagenback-Wallace. But of all those I never knew a better one than Adam Forepaugh, Jr. He could certainly put in more acts and run a show faster than any equestrian director that his father ever had. Young Adam was the equestrian director of the Forepaugh show for several years before the death of his father. He, too, was a great rider and one of the greatest elephant trainers that the world ever knew. Yet he was a good handier of people and had the respect of all the people in the dressing rooms.

With the great Ringling show, Al Ringling, the older of the brothers, has always been a prominent figure in the dressing room of that show from the time they first started in the business. Last year at the Coliseum in Chicago, Al would stand at the ring bank and blow his whistle for the acts, the same as he had done for more than 25 years; and when I asked him why he did not turn that

job over to somebody else and occupy an easy chair and watch the great show, he, said, "Well, Dave, I started at this work early in the game and I rather enjoy it. It seems to be hard for me to think that somebody else could do it just as well." This, in many cases, is quite true. For it is an undisputed fact that the whistle of the boss will bring quick returns.

I expect every day to hear of the opening date of the big ones, with some of the principals who will take part [during] the coming year, and this I will tell you later.

March 13, 1915

On Tuesday last, March 9, I attended a meeting of the Showmen's League of America, which was held in the German Room of the Grand Pacific Hotel in Chicago. At this meeting many of the showmen of all over the country were in attendance, including John D. Warren, who is the president of the league, and up to this last winter was one of the owners of the Hagenbeck & Wallace Shows. Mr. Warren is one of the highest type of gentlemen in the business, and retired from active work only a few months ago with plenty of this world's goods. The Showmen's League was lucky indeed to secure such a Man and his influence, which is world-wide, to fill the important position of president.

Warren A. Patrick, who was formerly a Janesville boy, is the secretary, and much enthusiasm was shown at this meeting for the future of the showmen. It is most likely that in or near Chicago is where the home will finally be located.

Many new members were taken in and all the charter members are trying to gather in as many as possible.

August 5th of this year was made Showmen's League Day, at which time 11 tented exhibitions in the country will set apart a certain percentage of their receipts of that day for the benefit of the Showmen's League. Several of the showmen present volunteered to give ten per cent of their gross receipts on August 5th for that



purpose. One member alone the past year sent in 82 new names as members of the league.

The meeting held on last Tuesday was the third annual meeting of the league, and from the enthusiasm shown at the meeting there is no doubt that what in the near future the showmen's home will be a reality. At these meetings you will always meet someone who has made a name for themselves far different than the average man. At this meeting I met J. H. Sullivan, better known as "Bronco John of Valparaiso, Ind." Bronco John has been famous for many years in the wild west show business. For away back in history Bronco John served many years under Buffalo Bill and was one of his most trusted scouts. At the outbreak of the Spanish-American war it was Bronco John that had charge of all the transports into that country-of the loading and unloading of all the paraphernalia to and from the great boats.

The following letter, which Bronco John prizes very highly, will give you something of an idea of the way his services were appreciated at the close of the war: "Headquarters Department of the Province of Havana and Pinar Del Rio Quemados, Cuba, June 4th, 1899 To Who It Mat Concern: "I hereby certify that Mr. John H. Sullivan (known as "Bronco John") has been with me for some time as Master of Transportation and Embarkation and Disembarkation. His work is therefore well known to me. It is easy for me to add my name to those of so many others who have previously approved his past services. His energy and the peculiar intelligence displayed by him is so well known that it is not necessary for me to refer to it here, but simply endorse, which I cheerfully do, what others have so well said of him. (Signed) Fitzhugh Lee, Brigadier General."

Another man with whom I traveled for some years with the Forepaugh show is Rhoda Royal, the great horse and elephant trainer, who stands at the head of the profession in his line. The Rhoda Royal acts are getting their share [in] vaudeville around Chicago. The Royal Comedy Circus, featuring Jack Harris, the clown policeman, has proven a big hit in the local

houses. Rhoda Royal's celebrated four-horse act, featuring four thoroughbred Arabian stallions, played the different halls around the city for one of the candidates for Mayor. Tiny May, Rhoda's smallest baby elephant, has just finished a four weeks engagement at T. V. Eaton & Co.'s Department store at Winnipeg, Can., and has started on a forty weeks' tour for Marcas Loew. The Tiny May act is said to have been the only animal act that was allowed [to] enter Canada this winter, the authorities having restricted all animal acts from entering that country on account of the hoof and mouth disease.

Mr. Royal is making a specialty of baby elephant acts, and at the present time has three training quarters, Chicago, Denver and St. Louis. Eddie Brown is acting as manager. Mr. Royal has five of the smallest baby elephants in America and every one doing a different act. Rhoda will leave Chicago about March 10 for Denver, where he will again assume the position of equestrian director for the Buffalo Bill-Sells-Floto Shows. It will be his seventh season with this aggregation.

The Sells-Floto and Buffalo Bill Wild West Shows, whose winter quarters are in Denver, Colo., will

Buffalo Bill Cody on Sells-Floto.



open on March 27 in Texas. And the Hagenbeck-Wallace Shows, which is wintering in Cincinnati, Ohio, will open there the last week in April. And by the way, John B. Warren told me at the meeting that Janesville would be on the list this year of the Hagenbeck-Wallace tour. The Great Ringling Show will open at the Coliseum in Chicago on April 17 and continue until May 2, inclusive. After the close of their Chicago engagement, [they] will go to St. Louis. The Barnum show will open at Madison Square Garden, and have issued the following call for their people: "All performers engaged with this show for the season of 1915 must report for rehearsals Friday, March 26, at the Madison Square Garden, New York. Acknowledge this call to Barnum & Bailey, Bridgeport, Conn. Musicians report at Madison Square Garden, Wednesday, March 24. Musicians acknowledge call to E. S. Brill, Bandmaster, 229 West 38th St., New York."

March 20, 1915

On Friday last, at his home in New York City, death came and ended the suffering of another one of the famous showmen. His name was William Washington Cole. W. W. Cole, as he was known in the business, for well nigh half a century, was a different character in more ways than one, that ever was in the business.... His father died before young Cole was but of his teens, and the management of the show fell on the shoulders of "Mother" Cole, as she was known for many years around the show; and she, with the aid of the young son, could always be found at the main entrance. The Cole show was started in the late 60's as a wagon show and it was only a few years until it took its place among the best in the business.

W. W. Cole had the distinction of being the only showman in his day that never allowed his picture to appear on the billboard or in the newspaper. He was a quiet man, and he seldom would be found busying himself around the show, but very often would be found sitting on the fence near the show grounds, visiting with a citizen or several farmers that might chance

along; and it was in this way that young Cole got much information as to the condition of the country in the different towns in which he showed. It was the W. W. Cole show that put out the first electric light plant, the steam-walking man, and several tableaux in the early 1870's of President Lincoln and his cabinet, and all the famous generals of the Civil War. All these in their day proved to be a drawing card, and the Cole show was soon one of the high class circuses of the country.

After the money commenced to roll in and young Cole saw he had a surplus, he commenced to look around for a place where he could invest his shillings where they might later grow into dollars. He did not seem to be long, however, in deciding that the great gateway to the new world was the place for him. And it was in the late 1870's that young Cole commenced to invest his money in business property in New York City. At the close of the show every fall for many years, [it] would be found that young Cole had picked up another piece of property in the great city. All this time, too, his show was growing more powerful in the business and it got to be a rival of the Barnum and Forepaugh shows.

It was then that the owners of the Barnum show went to Mr. Cole and proposed to buy him out. Their object being to get him out of the way as a rival. The deal was soon made and Mr. Cole got a large amount of money and a certain interest in the Barnum show, where for a season or two he was one of the managers. A little later he sold his interest in the Barnum show and retired and took up residence in New York City, where for many years he lived quietly, looking after his business interests there. Something like two years ago Mr. Cole bought one of the famous comers in New York known as the Delmonico Restaurant comer, which was located on Madison Ave. and 27th Street, running through to Fourth Ave. And to this day this one of the best known comers in New York City. He tore down the old structure and erected a twenty-two story office building on the site, which will stand there as a monument to Mr. Cole and his business career.

Mr. Cole leaves a widow, but no



William Washington Cole.

children. So like the late James A. Bailey, his millions in all probability will go largely to his wife's relatives. And in Mr. Cole's passing, as far as I know, there is but one left of the big showmen of the country, and that is Uncle Ben Wallace of Peru, Indiana.

A few days ago I received a letter from my old friend John Sullivan, better known as "Bronco John of Valparaiso, Indiana," in which he enclosed a letter which he had received from Colonel Cody, Buffalo Bill. As it gives a description of his beautiful ranch in that country and the way the scout spends his winter months, I will give it to you in full, which is as follows: "E Ranch, Wyo., Feb. 15, 1915. My Dear Old Friend John: "I was sure pleased to get your letter. It found me here at my home ranch in the very heart of the Rockies. It's the one dear place in all the world to me. Here I am away from all the worries of the world. I have a great, rambling log house, plenty of rooms with fireplaces, fire wood galore, and all kinds of timber, from a tepee pole to a saw log. I have the finest kind on a two-story barn. Have whim-pine logs in it eighty feet long. I have all kinds of houses, sheds, etc.

"My house stands near the banks of the beautiful Shoshone River in the timber. I have the best sheltered ranch for stock on earth, with warm

springs, that were never known to freeze. I have one thousand acres of farm. We raise everything but corn, although we can raise sweet corn-roasting ears. I have several hundred head of white face cattle, have one hundred head of brood mares, and hogs--it's the greatest place to raise hogs. I have about four hundred. I sold seventy-two horses to the government, shipped eight carloads of fat cattle. I have unlimited range. The winter has been so mild a lot of my cattle have not come into the ranch for their alfalfa. Some time come and visit me on a real ranch. Charlie Andress spent a month with me last fall.

"I open my season at Fort Worth, Texas, March 27th. Both Little Bat and Frank Grouard are dead; so are a lot of the old-time Indians whom you knew, as well as the army officers.

"I hope you are enjoying life, for you deserve it. You have been one of the western men who were genuine and on the square.

"I will be 69 on February 26th, so the citizens of Cody are going to give a banquet at my hotel. My health is fine. With best wishes. Your friend, W. F. Cody."

March 27, 1915

Last week in New York City the will of the late W. W. Cole, the millionaire circus man who died on March 10, was probated. Mr. Cole died at his winter home at [the] Baltimore Hotel, where he and his wife had resided during the winter for many years. The estate consisted of about \$5,000,000, but \$100,000 of which went to charity and the balance to the widow.

In the past week I have been able to gather full statistics as to the early life of Mr. Cole. His ancestors on both sides were circus people for generations back, and it was in 1836 that the father, William H. Cole, accompanied by his wife, Mary Cook Cole, brought the first show across the ocean in a sailing vessel and landed in New York City. The show sailed from Grenwick, Scotland, September 8, 1836, and landed in New York just six weeks later. As far as it is possible to learn, this was the first show to land in this country and consisted of 40 adults, 25 children, 48 horses and

ponies, with wardrobe and trappings of all kinds that went to make up a first class show. A week later the show opened in an old theatre building on the Bowery in New York City, where it enjoyed a successful run of four weeks. From there the show went to Philadelphia, Boston and Baltimore. And shortly after opening in Baltimore the theatre took fire, and was burned to the ground with all the wardrobe and stage settings and most of the trained horses, which were stabled in the basement.

Mrs. Cole, whose name was Cook, had many relative in the business who were famous riders in their day, including Henry Cook and Woody Cook, the latter coming to this country about thirty-five years ago, where he remained several seasons traveling with the best shows on this side of the ocean.

The passing of W. W. Cole, as far as I can learn, ends the show career of the Coles and the Cooks in this country. W. W. Cole not only left millions but a name second to none; for his pathway all through life was strewn with charitable deeds and many of which can be recalled today by old timers in the business. It is said that after his retirement from the business in New York City, that thousands of dollars had been given by Mr. Cole in a quiet way to old timers in the business, who are now down and out.

A few days ago a letter was received in this city from J. W. Longbothan, from Havana, Cuba. Mr. Longbothan has visited in Janesville several times, where he has many friends; and in his letter gives a description of the two shows which are to start out from Havana this season under the management of Mr. Longbothan and the Pubianos. The Pubianos are the Ringlings in show business in Cuba, and start out two shows in different directions to tour that country the coming season. Mr. Longbothan is manager of [the] No. 2. show, and in this letter he describes the advancement that has been made in circus business in that country in the last few years. Among



Lithograph used by Cole's Circus.

other improvements, they have two regular American built sleepers for the people, which are the first to be put in use by circus owners in that country. Mr. Longbothan has added many new American ideas to the circus of that country, and this will be the first season that they will load and unload their trains by what they call pull-up teams, the same as they do in this country. They also send out [an] advance advertising car, where-to-fore they had sent their advertisers and billing paper by express, and only two, or three people to do the advertising ahead. Mr. Longbothan adds that the American sleepers and the American way of loading and unloading the train is a great curiosity in that country, and the newspapers speak of it as advertising "new American ideas" to the business of that country.

When I first went to the Adam Forepaugh show, his youngest brother, Jack Forepaugh, was what was known as the boss animal man. He had an assistant who went by the name of "Reddy," a nickname given him on account of the color of his hair. In conversation with Reddy one day, I found that he had been there four years, and he told me confidentially that he had expected long before this to have charge of the menagerie and would be promoted as soon as Mr. Forepaugh was advanced to some better position, which he had thought he would be long before that. Reddy said that when he got to be boss animal man that he would be satisfied with that job to stay there

as long as he lived. "And yet," said he, "I sometimes think that it never will come, for I have been assistant to Mr. Forepaugh now for four years." But it was only a few weeks later that Jack Forepaugh was given the position of door tender at the main entrance, and Reddy proudly walked out to the ticket wagon and told me that I could put him on the payroll as boss animal man and that he was to receive the same salary that Mr. Forepaugh

had, which was nearly double what he had been getting.

Whenever I had any friends come to the show, I would always take them in the menagerie and introduce them to Reddy, and tell them that he had been with the show for several years, that he had commenced as a helper, and now he had charge of the entire menagerie, which would always put a broad smile on Reddy's face. But he deserved it all, for he had been a faithful servant from the start, and his one subject had been to get to the head of his profession, and that he did.

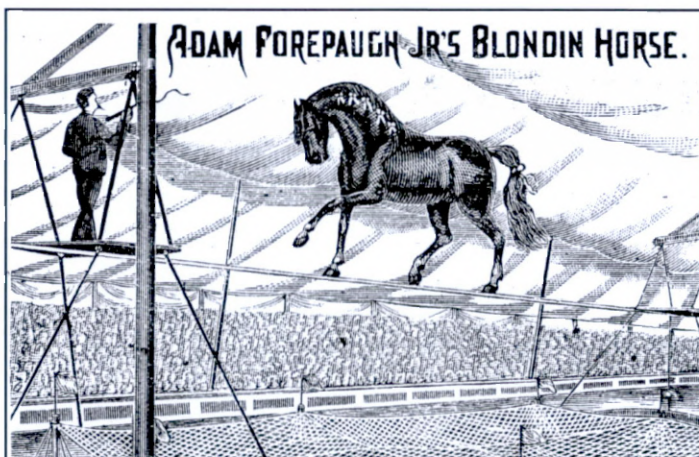
Reddy's job was all the year around and he was one of the principals in the winter quarters, where many matters of importance were talked over during the winter. And any information wanted in the spring as to what had been done in the winter quarters during the winter could always be had from Reddy, for he was always brought into consultation when any change of importance was made. Reddy finished the season before Adam Forepaugh died, but what became of him later I never knew. But probably he is with some show, for his kind were always in demand in the business.

In 1857 the money conditions of the country were bad and the government allowed the banks of the country, for a time at least, to issue their own bills. This seemed to give the counterfeiters the chance of their life, and it was not so long until the country was flooded with counterfeit money. The Dan Rice circus was showing in a town of Illinois when one of the patrons of the show

received a counterfeit two dollar bill from the ticket wagon in change; or, at least, he wrote Dan Rice a letter two or three days later and claimed that the counterfeit bill was given to him by his ticket agent, and wished him to send him another bill. Dan Rice put the letter in his pocket and paid no attention to it, until the show closed in the fall, when he sat down and wrote the man, saying that he hoped he would pardon him for the delay, but to tell him the truth, counterfeit two dollar bills had grown much scarcer later in the fall, and it was only a day or two before the closing of the show that he was able to get hold of one, which he would enclose, and hoped that it would be satisfactory.

April 3, 1915

After the close of the Forepaugh show in the fall of 1882, which was my first year with that show, I was given to understand by Mr. Forepaugh that I would be expected to report at least two or three weeks before the opening of the show the coming year and assist him in organizing and getting the show ready for the road. I put in an appearance in due time the following spring and was given a horse and buggy for my own use, and every day would be furnished a list of different materials which I would be expected to buy for the show the following day. As this did not take much time, I soon made up my mind that I wanted to make a trip to Spring Garden, as that was the winter quarters of the show, and where all the cars, cages and tableaux were built during the winter; and also take a look into the ring barn where Adam Forepaugh, Jr. put in ten hours every day during the winter season training elephants, horses, ponies, and in fact all kinds of animals for the coming season. And it was many times at the opening of the show in spring that Adam Forepaugh, Jr., would spring a new surprise, not only on the public but to hundreds of people belonging to the show; and the ring barn was the one place where up to that time no one had been admitted except Adam



Blondin, Forepaugh's wire walking horse.

Forepaugh, Sr., owner of the show. But as I had been manager for Burr Robbins for three years and practically had charge of everything from the ring barn down, I did not hesitate to drive to the winter quarters and rap on the door for admission to the training barn.

Adam Forepaugh, Jr.'s assistant came to the door and told me politely that no one was allowed in the ring barn. I said to him, "Tell Adam who is here and I think he will allow me to come in."

Young Forepaugh came to the door and after a little hesitation said, "Yes, you come on in. It looks as though you were going to be a fixture here, and assist dad in organizing the show, so I suppose it will be all right."

And it was from this ring barn in the spring, as I have said before, where many surprises were brought out for the coming season, as Adam Forepaugh, Jr., at that time, was certainly the greatest animal trainer that the world had ever seen. From that time on, when I was not busy around the show, I would drive to Spring Garden, the winter quarters, and put in an hour or two each day watching the new stunts that were prepared for the coming season.

One of the great surprises among many others that were brought out from that ring barn was the eight big elephants that were taught to dance the quadrille; and this was done in the winter of 1886 and 1887. Their first appearance before the public was at Madison Square Garden, New York City, in the spring of '87. This

was one of the few acts that was kept before the public for many years; and only a few years ago, perhaps 25 years later than their debut in New York City, I saw the same ponderous elephants still dancing the quadrille. And when I saw the act that I had long since forgotten, I felt like going to the elephants and asking them if they did not remember my watching them in the winter quarters

in Philadelphia when they were practicing the act, twenty-five years before. But this is not to be wondered at when you know something about elephants, for elephants seldom die and never forget.

It was also in this same ring barn that Blondin, the rope-walking pony, got his education. Millions of people all over the United States were delighted to watch Blondin in his act. Many other horses obtained their education in this same old ring barn, where they were taught to do almost everything but talk. The eight trained stallions which were brought from France to this country, were also put through their stunts two or three times a day; and Firefly, the pony which did the trapeze act, was also educated in the same place. Young Forepaugh, in his work, had four assistants and it was fair to say that during work hours that, aside from his assistants, Adam Forepaugh and myself were the only ones that were ever admitted to the ring barn during work hours. But the only act of all these that is still fresh in the mind of the public is the eight dancing elephants, which was the greatest feature of all in its day.

By the last of this week or the first of next, bill cars No. 1 of all the big shows will be started out for the coming season. Bill car No. 1 is the one that shows the way during the entire season, and is always about four weeks ahead. As the Ringling show opens at the Coliseum in Chicago on the 17th of this month, they will soon commence to move at least a part of the show to the Coliseum, and commence getting it into place. Their

engagement in Chicago closes May 2nd inclusive, and from there I think the show goes to St. Louis for several days' engagement. The Barnum show will close in New York about the same time, after which they will make most of the principle cities of the East.

I have often heard people say, after seeing a big crowd at one of the great shows, there must have been at least 15,000 people at the afternoon show, and even heard them say as high as 25,000. But if there is any one thing that the average person knows but little about, it is a large crowd of people. In my time in the business, I never saw but one day when the receipts ran over \$12,000, and that included everything around the show; and I think without doubt the largest receipts ever taken by any show in Janesville was taken by the Buffalo Bill show on their first visit here after the world's fair. At least eighty per cent of this was taken at the afternoon performance. And the treasurer of the show told me in the evening that this would be counted among the best of the season. But at that time wild west shows were not so plentiful, and the Buffalo Bill show had made a record at the world's fair, and people came from miles around to see the greatest of all wild west.

Years ago many managers of the shows, when they would have a large house in the afternoon, would swell their receipts to the people of the town in which they were showing, and tell them that was among the best of the season; and often give them credit for several thousand people which they did not have. This pleased the towns people to think that they had one of the best show towns in the country, and this would be heralded far and near. But Adam Forepaugh would never allow this done in his show. My orders always were: if a newspaper man or even a prominent citizen wanted to know how many people were in the house in the afternoon, or how much we had taken on the entire day, take the house book and show them the actual receipts. He always contended that where you lead the public to believe



H. H. Tammon and Bill Cody.

you were taking hundreds of dollars more out of their town than you actually were, that it had a tendency to make high licenses and everything else in proportion. And they always got a look at the door book, which gave the actual receipts of the show, afternoon and evening.

The story of the Showmen's League of America special train to the Panama-Pacific Exposition, as exclusively published in last week's issue of the New York Upper, had hardly gone the rounds of the various winter quarters of the country when Con T. Kennedy, the father of the scheme and who will assemble the train, was bombarded in Leavenworth with letters and telegrams from showmen who desire to make the trip to the Pacific coast. It is a trifle early to outline Mr. Kennedy's plans, but anyone that knows Kennedy will take it for granted that the "special" will be that and then some. The S. L. A. tourists are sure to be royally entertained at the various stops along the way to Frisco; and when the bunch lands in the "Paris of America," Kennedy and his confreres will be handed the keys of the city.

April 10, 1915

Something like two weeks ago H. H. Tammon of Denver, Colorado, received a telegram from his advance agent to the effect that the Sells-Floto Buffalo Bill Shows had been refused a license to show in San Francisco any time during the coming season. Mr. Tammon is many times a millionaire and one of the

principal owners of the Sells-Floto Buffalo Bill Shows, and has himself as well as his associate, W. W. Cody, Buffalo Bill, had much to do with the development of the Far West for many years. To think that Buffalo Bill in particular should be refused a license to show in the world's fair city for their coming season was more than Mr. Tammon could bear. He immediately announced to the Denver papers that, regardless of cost, the show would exhibit at San Francisco for five days on the day and date which he had figured on. He then took a

train for the west and announced when leaving Denver that no obstacle would be too great for him to overcome for him to exhibit his show for at least five days. "For," said he, "if there is any one man in the country that thousands of people are waiting to welcome, it is Buffalo Bill, the man who had as much or more to do in making the development of that country possible more than fifty years ago. For it was he that was then fighting the Indians and clearing the pathway for the early settlers, who are the ones that were developing that new country."

H. H. Tammon has for many years been doing big things in the West, and his friends are anxiously looking forward to the outcome of the present difficulty. It is safe to say that at some time in the near future the big billboards of San Francisco will announce the coming of the great show; for If there are any two men in the country that shall receive a warm welcome, it is Buffalo Bill and H. H. Tammon.

Charles Andress of Chicago, who has been prominent in circus business for many years, has built two new machines as the "carry-us-all." These are built something on the style of the merry-go-round, only that they are much larger, as their name indicates "carry us all." These machines were made in Leavenworth, Kansas, by the Parker Company; and some two weeks ago one was shipped to the Sells-Floto & Buffalo Bill Shows and another to the Yankee Robinson Show. Each machine is loaded on three 20-foot

wagons, and the three wagons are transported over the road on a 64-foot flat car. It is said that the complete cost of the two machines and the wagons on which they are loaded is over \$20,000. And as it takes several men to run the machine, you can readily see that at a five cent. fare it will have to make good and "carry us all" to make much money. But Charles Address has studied it out well and his friends are looking forward to the venture as a money maker for the coming season.

About 65 years ago a young man by the name of Albert D. Burdick was driving an overland coach from Afton to Janesville. Afton at that time was the railroad metropolis of this part of the country, for the railroad had not yet landed in Janesville. While there were several coaches doing this kind of work, it was the driver's [responsibility] to solicit the passengers from the train. And the first driver to crack his whip and leave Afton for Janesville was considered the best man. But little did young Burdick think at that time that he was learning a business that would later carry him from the East into the Far West. Later, when the railroads pushed further west, which had a tendency to put the overland drivers out of business, young Burdick commenced to look around for another job in the same line of business.

[Among] the earliest circuses and menageries on the road, were the O'Brien and Barnum shows; and it was there that long team drivers were in demand. A man by the name of Bill Lewis was the boss hostler, and it was to him that young Burdick appealed for work. Big Bill Lewis, boss hostler, was a gruff man to approach; and when young Burdick asked him for work, Lewis immediately asked him if he could drive a long team. "That has been my business for some time in the West," said Burdick, "where I drove over-land" coaches." This was the kind of a man Bill Lewis was looking for, and he immediately engaged young Burdick. And it was with the O'Brien and later with the Barnum show that Burdick spent nine or ten years. During this time he was also connected with the Howes' Great London Show, and it was here that he met Madame Dockrill, the famous



Charles Address.

English woman who had several high class horses which she had brought over from London. Mr. Burdick was Madame Dockrill's private groom for about three years.

Mr. Burdick is now living quietly in bachelor quarters at Milton. And [except] for an occasional visit to Milwaukee or Janesville, he can always be found in the old town where his parents stayed many years ago. The name Burdick has been familiar in Rock County from the time the Indians were driven out into the far west. Mr. Burdick will be 84 years old his next birthday, but carries his years lightly and can always be seen in Janesville on circus day. He told me a few days ago that he still enjoyed the circus as much as he did in his boyhood days. "And," he said, "old Bill Lewis, the boss hostler who gave me my first job in the business, only died a few years ago in his ninetieth year." But to me Mr. Burdick was a new one in the business, for it never entered my head that the oldest living showman was making his home within eight miles of Janesville, and he helped to make history in circus business nearly sixty years ago.

The great Barnum and Bailey show opened in Madison Square Garden, New York City, on April 1st and will close there on April 24th,

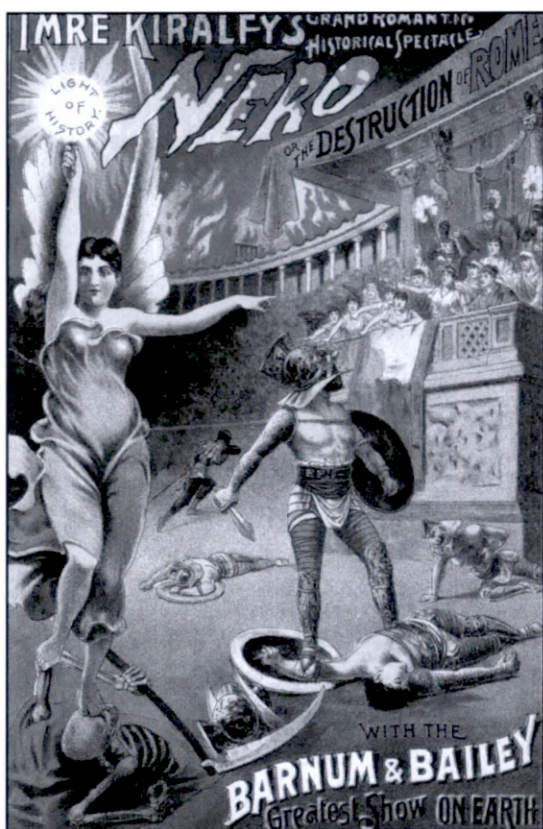
and take to one night stands on the road. And despite the fact that a circus of large proportion has been showing in the big hippodrome building for more than two months, only closing two weeks before the opening of the Barnum & Bailey show, yet they opened to a big business. The show comes nearer being an all American show this year than ever before, as it was impossible for many European people to leave their country. The show also has many new thrills, especially in the riding acts, which are the finest that the public has ever seen.

The Ringlings open on Saturday, April 17th, at the Coliseum in Chicago and close there on May 2nd, after which they go to St. Louis. The Hagenbeck-Wallace show opened in Cincinnati on Saturday, April 24, after which they take to the one day stand. This show has been remodeled to the expense of more than \$150,000 and will take the road bigger and better than ever before.

April 17, 1915

In giving you something of an idea of the circus and pageant of centuries ago, I will have to give it to you as a bit of history rather than that of experience. In those days they were organized regardless of cost and participated in by all nations and given as a free exhibition, no admission fee being charged. By the following description of the circus and the pageant of those days you can readily see that the shows of today are small affairs compared with them; and although the shows of today have grown to enormous proportions in the last fifty years, yet they would hardly make a side show for circuses of centuries ago.

Although the circus is strictly an American institution at the present time, ancient history tells us that Augustus Caesar and Nero were circus magnates with whom our present promulgators of that class of entertainment cannot compare. Let us return to the very beginning of the Christian era, or even before the birth of the Savior, and we find that the circus and pageant or carnival were participated in by the whole community on such a scale as to make our present day three-ring aggregation seem a mere pigmy in



Program booklet of Barnum & Bailey's Nero spec.

comparison. The circus was an important factor in the centenary festival, begun in the year 17 B.C. by Augustus Caesar. It then consisted of a pageant held entirely by the female population, and came after a day of prayer and sacrifice, the pageant 'at this time being purely ecclesiastical. This exhibition was given on a large platform erected for the occasion in an open space where plenty of room was to be had for the spectators to stand. No seats were placed and no admission was charged.

Almost everyone is familiar with the history of Nero's reign. He was a lover of amusement in any form; and when the ordinary exhibition of the circus palled on him, the circus arena became a slaughter pen for his enemies. He had a large stadium erected in what are now in the Vatican gardens; and during his entire reign, from 54 A.D. up to the time he committed suicide in 68 A.D., he kept himself surrounded with singers, actors and musicians, and various other entertainers.

The most wonderful circus of Rome was the one with whose name we are

all so familiar--the Coliseum completed about the year 80 A.D. Although not the largest, it was the most magnificent stadium the world has ever known. The exterior circumference of this huge structure was one thousand, six hundred and twelve feet. It had a triple elevation of four-score arches, one hundred and eight feet high, and the cost of this monster stadium was approximately \$7,500,000. Think of it! Two hundred and forty tiers of seats, and if we allow two feet of space for each spectator, we find the seating capacity [to be] approximately 175,000.

Circus Days in Rome! The sun coming up over the eastern horizon, dissipating the chill of early dawn, found spectators gathered from the furthest regions. Samaritans, Sigambrians, Arabians, Sabaeans and Aetheopians thronged the streets. A gabble of a hundred tongues could be heard on this day of all days for the Roman citizen. A police force of seven thousand men made a feeble attempt to quell disturbances that frequently arose between members of this vast multitude. After much hustling and bustling about preparing the morning meal, the blare of a trumpet is heard in the distance and the throngs begin wending their way toward the monster arena where the day's entertainment [are] festivities beyond the wildest dreams of modern civilization. The streets were filled with pleasure seeking humanity in what was then the capital of the world.

Imagine the thrill of pride the master of ceremonies must have felt as he stood in the center of that huge arena, looking up into the faces of nearly a quarter of a million people and hearing the roar of approval, sounding like a crash of

thunder as he gave the word for the opening of the circus, a circus which has never been equaled in point of size, brilliancy and pomp since that time.

Between the beautiful grass-covered slopes of the hills, Aventine and Palatine (two of the seven hills of Rome), was built in the year 329 B. C. by Tarquin, the younger, the first circus arena. This vast building was built entirely of wood and was later on destroyed by fire, and was restored in the year 174 B.C. Caesar had a canal ten feet wide built between the lower tiers of seats and the arena as a precaution against the ravages of wild beasts, which were then used in some of the exhibitions. The Maximus was again destroyed by fire in 31 B.C.; and on being rebuilt, the lower half was restored with marble and the upper half of stone. During the reign of Antonius Pius, before the last restoration, the upper tiers of seats gave way from overcrowding of spectators and hundreds were killed.

The Regionary Catalogue gives the seating capacity of the Maximus as 480,000, but Pliny is said to have held the capacity at 250,000 (Burkardt gives it as 275,000).

On festival days the circus was opened with a procession forming at the capitol. First came cars conveying images of the Gods and Imperial family, then the Chief Magistrate, sometimes the Emperor himself in royal regalia seated in a magnificent chariot drawn by the finest horses in the land. Following it came the Royal family, the court nobility, the execu-

Chariot races in the Barnum & Bailey spec.



tive officials, and all other dignitaries of the empire. The procession passed along the forum and on to the circus, where it was vociferously received by the populace. After those who participated in the parade were seated and the Emperor had been ensconced in the royal box, which was decorated in purple and odd cloth of the finest texture, the chief Magistrate gave the signal for the opening of the festivities by throwing a white flag into the arena.

The chariot races consisted of seven rounds of the course and as many as twenty-four races were held in one day. The chariots were drawn by special bred horses and were driven by slaves who were trained for that especial purpose. Some of the drivers in these contests were held in high esteem for their horsemanship. But as a class they were shunned as disreputable individuals. At times the races were interspersed with daring feats of "bareback" riding, which is still used as a feature in the modern circus.

What a spectacle it must have been, that great stadium filled with quarter of a million or more of sport loving humanity, dressed in their robes of gaudy hue, the Emperor and his family seated in the royal box, which was embellished with beautiful hangings of velvet and satin, the chariots racing madly around the huge arena, throwing clouds of dust in the air as they cut into the earth at the turns, the spectators howling with disgust or pleasure as their favorite was left behind or was out in front, showing the way to his competitors. The last lap of the race is on! Everyone on their feet screaming words of encouragement to their favorites. The shouts of the multitude combined with the thunder of horses hoofs and the nimble of chariots make a bedlam of sound above which a cannon's roar could not be heard. The finish! It would be a feeble effort at best if the writer should attempt to describe what must have been a wonderful sight as the winner of the contests drove his steaming horses up before the royal box to receive the badge of victory.

These one time circus animals, the Camel, the giraffe, the

American bison, the zebu, the llama and the peccary will probably be missing when the circus parades this spring. Secretary Houston, of the Department of Agriculture, has put the ban on the transportation of those six beasts from state to state, because they're all likely to catch the foot and mouth disease affecting all domestic cattle all over the country. The camel, the giraffe, the bison, the zebu, the llama, and the peccary must remain where they are at present. By June, when it is expected the foot and mouth disease will be under control, the interstate bars may be lifted. The tough hide and feet of the elephant (who hasn't much of a mouth anyhow) makes him immune from the dreaded disease. Lions, tigers and other cat beasts never catch it.

April 24, 1915

On Saturday evening last, April 17, the great Ringling show opened the season of 1915 at the Coliseum Building in Chicago. Despite the strike that was on in the city, the great building was crowded with people, and the show is said by people in the business to be one of the finest the Ringlings ever put out. The show will close its Chicago engagement on May 2nd inclusive, and from there will make a long run of 527 miles to Zanesville, Ohio, where they will give two performances, which will inaugurate the season's work of the one day stand.

The opening of the Al Ringling theater in Baraboo in 1915.

Al Ringling has let the contract and work has already been begun on his own \$100,000 opera house at the old home of the Ringlings in Baraboo, Wis. And while this may not be a profitable investment, it will serve for many years to come as the monument to the Ringlings, name and a credit to their home town.

In a letter from Charles E. Cory of the Hagenbeck-Wallace show, Mr. Cory states that the show will open at the winter quarters home in Cincinnati, Ohio, on Saturday, April 24, and immediately start out on the one day stand. The show has been enlarged and rebuilt at an expense of more than \$150,000 the past winter, and Mr. Cory states that in organizing the show for the coming year, no high class act has been turned down on account of the price, and that the show will go out the coming season bigger and better than ever before. This show for years has been among the high class aggregations of the country, and without doubt will have a prosperous season. The show will come west a little later and as Janesville is on the list of good show towns, it may be possible that Janesville will be considered in their tour.

Quit a number of showmen will leave Chicago on Saturday, April 24, to be at the opening of the Hagenbeck-Wallace show in Cincinnati, and will be headed by John B. Warren, president, and Warren A. Patrick, secretary, of the Showmen's League of America. In addition to being president of the Showmen's League of America, a position that he sustains with due grace and dignity, Mr. Warren has recently taken on added honors in having been largely instrumental in bringing into being the Show Folks Thompson-for-Mayor club in Chicago, which is to be made a permanent political organization for amusement people. John B. Warren is a self-made man, and of great executive ability. His radiates sunshine and activity. He is widely known and his following is a loyal one. Charity never knocks at Mr. Warren's door in vain. With John B. Warren at its affairs, the



Showmen's League of America will grow in strength and power as time goes on, and the Show Folks' Political Club should take on national dimensions.

Three baby lions at the Bostock Animal Gardens at Main and Washington streets in Los Angeles, California, were named by Mrs. Thomas R. Marshall, wife of the Vice-president of the United States. The names chosen by Mrs. Marshall were: Bryan, the Scrapper; Wilson, the Obstinate; and Marshall, the Gentle.

Down in his little neck of woods, Governor McDonald of New Mexico likes to play the part of a petty tyrant, even though a lot of inoffensive, helpless animals must suffer and even though the humane laws of congress to protect these animals shall be violated in consequence. This is what happened. The Sells-Floto circus and Buffalo Bill shows pulled out of Denver Sunday afternoon in two sections, en route to San Bernardino, California, where the show opens next week. The trains were the handsomest and most sanitary and perfect that ever left Denver. Everything was brand new; everything was spick and span and clean-new paint new decorations, in fact, trains that would have caused the entire people of Colorado to rejoice could they have seen them wind their graceful ways to the south and west.

All the employees had been vaccinated against typhoid, as well as small pox. Every animal was in the pink of perfect condition, in order to avoid any complication with the quarantine laws against livestock. Every animal that could be infected by the foot and mouth disease, or which could even carry it, was left behind in winter, quarters. This in deference to the quarantine laws of a number of western states, one of which is New Mexico. The trains consisted of some fifty cars. There were about 650 men and women and 450 animals. For years the Sells-Floto show has been opening in Albuquerque, N. M., where it has many friends and where it is almost regarded as a local Albuquerque organization.

It was thought at first that

arrangements might be made to give one show there in passing through, as they were compelled to stop at Albuquerque to water and feed. When the trains rolled into Albuquerque, Manager Hutchinson was met by officials from the governor, and was ordered to put out immediately; that not only would shows not be permitted to unload and rest the animals and feed and water, but he wanted the trains to move out without a moment's delay. Manager Hutchinson tried to explain to the governor's emissaries that they were not violating any of the quarantine laws, that all the animals were in perfect condition, and that they were carrying no animal that could even be infected with the foot and mouth disease; that he had a clean bill of health from the Colorado state veterinarian, Dr. Yard, and that according to the laws of congress, they had to stop and water and feed the animals. The governor and his hired men were obdurate and the Governor's brutal and inhuman instructions had to be obeyed.

The Santa Fe railroad, over whose tracks the trip to California is being made, was so shocked at the Governor's unreasonable and arbitrary ruling, that it coupled a number of water cars onto the show trains in order that the animals might have at least something to drink and not famish from thirst on the trip that had to be made, in order to get out of New Mexican territory and into a saner and more humane state. It did not seem to matter to this governor that the one herd of elephants alone on the train was worth many thousands of dollars,

The marshall of the 1915 Ringling Bros. parade.



and that the other trained animals were all equally valuable, for he had issued his command and it must be obeyed, right or wrong, even though the laws of Congress had to be violated in order to carry out the governor's instructions. And so all day and all night the trains pounded on and on until they crossed the New Mexico line and entered Arizona, where [the animal] were immediately unloaded and fed and rested. and it is to be hoped that Governor McDonald is well satisfied with himself and his orders, which inflicted such unnecessary suffering upon 450 helpless animals.

May 1, 1915

To give you an idea of the hardships that we had to encounter in the wagon, show days of the 1870's, I am going to tell you of a little incident that happened one night in the Wabash country of southern Illinois. The roads back in those days were far different to what they are today. And yet they would tell you in different towns that much of the roads from there to the next town would be pike roads. That meant in those days that they had plowed up the dirt or gravel to one side and rounded it up in the center of the road. Many times we would start out at 10 o'clock at night and it would be well into the morning before we would reach the next town, which might possibly be not more than twenty miles away. But, in this particular season, we encountered much rain and often the banks of the Wabash river would overflow and in places be more than two or three miles wide.

One night it was raining hard, as it had been most of the time for several days, and when we were ready to leave the hotel, the very faithful leader of the band, Johnny Smith, and his men stood on the front stoop of the hotel and refused to get into the bandwagon. When I asked them the reason, Johnny said that Frank Hunt, the driver, had been drinking, and that they would not take any chances on his driving that night. Frank Hunt was a big team driver and one of the best in the show while he was not drinking, but was mean and hard to handle when intox-

icated. I finally got Frank up onto the seat and got Johnny Smith and his band in the wagon, with the understanding that I was to walk ahead with a lantern and show them the way and see that everything was all right.

We had not been out more than a half mile until the big team driver stopped his horses and refused to go any further, saying that he would not follow anybody, that they did not have to show him the way. And when I got back to the wagon I saw that something would have to be done, so I put the driver back in the bandwagon, and for the first time I drove six horses through to the next town.

It was only a few minutes until Frank Hunt, the driver, was fast asleep, and even when we reached the next town we were unable to wake him.

Big team drivers at that time were hard to get, and Delavan, the boss hostler would not let any kind of a driver go that was able to drive six or eight horses. But Hunt had made me lot of trouble at different times, and I made up my mind to get rid of him quietly. As the show grounds joined the railroad yards in this town, and a freight train was standing near with several empty freight cars with the doors open, I got three or four men to help me and we took Frank, put him into the freight car, and closed the door. To this day we never knew whether Frank Hunt woke up in New York City or in New Orleans, for I don't think anyone with the show ever saw him after that. What became of Frank Hunt was always kept a secret by the men that loaded him in the car and Delavan, the boss hostler, always thought that Frank, while on one of his drunken sprees, wandered away from the show. Many years later, Johnny Smith would ask me if I ever heard of Frank Hunt.

Tuesday and Wednesday of this week, April 27 and 28, I spent in Chicago; and with a few friends on Tuesday evening attended the great Ringling show at the Coliseum building and was still able to find a few old timers that I had trouped with years ago. Tuesday evening the Ringling show played to a big house. Almost every seat was filled, and the great show has certainly got a hold on the people in Chicago. Charles

and Henry Ringling were the only ones of the brothers who were there. The show closes its Chicago engagement next Sunday evening, May 2nd, and will open the following Wednesday in Zanesville, Ohio. From there they go southeast, showing in Washington, D. C., for two days, May 10 and 11, Baltimore 19 and 14, and on to Newburg, N. Y., May 22. The Ringling show will make all the principal cities in the East and later expect to get a few of the best towns in Canada.

On Tuesday afternoon I called on my old friend Warren A. Patrick, and while visiting with him an old gentleman stepped into the office, and after looking at me for a minute or two, he reached out his hand and said, "Dave, you haven't forgotten your old friend, have you?" But as I had not seen him since 1889, coupled with bad eyesight, I could not place him. "Well," he said, "the last time I saw you was in the fall of 1889, when the show closed for the season at Alliance, Ohio."

In a second the man and the name came to me as though it had happened last week. His name was Mike S. Bodkin, and Mike for 20 years had been connected with the privileges of the Forepaugh show. He joined the show in Philadelphia in the spring of 1880, and while he never had anything to do with the management of the show, he was a man of unquestioned integrity and always held a responsible position in different departments, and many times was called in consultation with Mr. Forepaugh as to what was best to do in this or that department. And what better recommendation could a man have than he had been in the employ

of as exacting and successful manager as Adam Forepaugh for twenty years.

In the office Mike and I got our chairs together and visited over the many years that we had spent together in the business. What Mike had forgotten, I remembered and visa versa. The people in the office suspended business until Mike and I got through telling our different experiences and happenings with the shows of years ago.

Mike Bodkin has lived in Chicago for the past eighteen or twenty years, and said he expected to spend the I balance of his years there. When I asked him if he expected to go back into the business, he shook his head and said, "Don't you know that the show managers of today are looking for the boys that are coming and not those that are going? For I was like hundreds of others when Adam Forepaugh died. It was up to me to look for a new business. For after the twenty years that I had spent there, no other show looked good to me, and the business that I had followed counted but little in starting out anew. And it is when I meet one of the old boys that I enjoy going back and rehearsing over the old days."

A part of the Barnum & Bailey circus gave a special performance in the courtyard of Bellevue Hospital, New York, at 10 A. M. April 17, for the benefit of all patients who could witness the show from the balconies. Ned Brill's orchestra played, and Director Bradna had charge of the show.

Barnum & Bailey performers at Bellevue Hospital.



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